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THE COLLECTED WORKS OF  
**ERIC VOEGELIN**

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VOLUME 19

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**HISTORY OF POLITICAL IDEAS**

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VOLUME I

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**HELLENISM, ROME, AND  
EARLY CHRISTIANITY**

## PROJECTED VOLUMES IN THE COLLECTED WORKS

1. *On the Form of the American Mind*
2. *Race and State*
3. *The History of the Race Idea*
4. *The Authoritarian State*
5. *Political Religions; The New Science of Politics; and Science, Politics, and Gnosticism*
6. *Anamnesis*
7. *Published Essays, 1922-*
8. *Published Essays*
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15. *Order and History, Volume II, The World of the Polis*
16. *Order and History, Volume III, Plato and Aristotle*
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19. *History of Political Ideas, Volume I*
20. *History of Political Ideas, Volume II*
21. *History of Political Ideas, Volume III*
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EARLY CHRISTIANITY**

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EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
**ATHANASIOS MOULAKIS**

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**HELLENISM, ROME, AND  
EARLY CHRISTIANITY**



## General Introduction to the Series

### I

This edition of *History of Political Ideas* represents the first complete publication of the typescript of Eric Voegelin's primary work of the fifteen-year period between 1939 and 1954. The decision to publish the "History" as part of the author's *Collected Works* was made during a meeting of the Advisory Board in September 1986. Although the *Collected Works* was not conceived as a critical edition of Voegelin's work, it was one of the board's primary goals to make as many of the author's writings as possible accessible to a larger public without delaying the publication into an indefinite future. Of Voegelin's previously unpublished work, the "History" is, without doubt, of central importance for an understanding not only of the author's own intellectual development but also of the fundamental theoretical problems that shaped his later work. There was general agreement at the time that without the "History" it would be difficult to justify the purpose of the *Collected Works* both to the publisher and to the public at large.

Once the decision to publish the "History" had been made, however, a number of questions needed to be faced, including whether Voegelin himself would have acceded to its publication and what form he would have wished to give to it. Neither question had an easy answer. On the one hand it could be argued that Voegelin himself had published individual chapters or parts of chapters during the 1940s and early 1950s.<sup>1</sup> He also had permitted John Hallowell

1. "Siger de Brabant" (1944), "Bakunin's Confession" (1946), "Plato's Egyptian Myth" (1947), "The Origins of Scientism" (1948), "The Philosophy of Existence:

to publish substantial parts of the chapters on the modern period under the title *From Enlightenment to Revolution* in 1975. On the other hand, it was much more difficult to establish whether the author would have allowed the publication of the entire manuscript. For this reason the board initially intended to call the series *Studies in the History of Political Ideas*, in the sense of the German term *Materialien*, so as to indicate that these volumes neither represent the form in which Voegelin himself would have published the manuscript nor constitute a complete text with a beginning and an end. If we now return to the book's original title after all, we must at the same time stress that the "History" published herein is an unrevised remnant of a much larger manuscript that was mined for other works, especially volumes 2 and 3 of *Order and History*. The brief discussion of Israel was expanded by the author into the large volume *Israel and Revelation*, volume 1 of *Order and History*.

In order to answer important questions about its text to the editors' satisfaction as well as to give the reader an accurate picture of this monumental abandoned work as possible, we must go back and trace its genesis and development. Voegelin himself repeatedly spoke about the "History," most notably in his *Autobiographical Reflections*, where he briefly summarized the process of writing the "History" from its inception in 1939 to the "breakthrough" of 1951 that occurred while he was preparing the Walgreen Lectures that became *The New Science of Politics*. There, faced with writing a concise theory of representation and existence in truth, Voegelin was forced to think through problems that had arisen in the course of more than a decade. Voegelin's realization was that he "had to give up 'ideas' as objects of a history and establish the experience of reality—personal, social, historical, cosmic—as the reality to be explored historically."<sup>2</sup> When he discovered that he could apply the problem of Gnosticism to modern ideological phenomena, Voegelin

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Plato's *Gorgias*" (1949), "The Formation of the Marxian Revolutionary Idea" (1950), "Machiavelli's Prince: Background and Formation" (1951), "More's Utopia" (1951), and "The World of Homer" (1953), the majority of which appeared in *Review of Politics*. A long article on Bodin (never published) was to follow, and the correspondence with Walter Gurian, the editor of *Review of Politics*, indicates.

2. Initially elicited by tape-recorded interview in 1973 for, and published in substantial part in, Ellis Sandoz, *The Voegelinian Revolution: A Biographical Introduction* (Baton Rouge, 1981), the "Autobiographical Memoir" (as it is sometimes called) was fully published in *Autobiographical Reflections*, ed. Ellis Sandoz (Baton Rouge, 1989); for the quoted passage see p. 80.



had found an important key to solving the problems of political order. But what had led up to that point is reflected in the "History of Political Ideas" and the slow and often painful process of its genesis.

## II

On February 9, 1939, Eric Voegelin signed a "Memorandum of Agreement" with McGraw-Hill Book Company for a book to be entitled "A History of Political Ideas." The book was to be a college textbook of approximately two hundred pages, and the manuscript was to be delivered to the publisher some time in 1940. The editor of the textbook series at McGraw-Hill at the time was Fritz Morstein Marx, a political scientist whom Voegelin had met at Harvard and who subsequently taught at Queens College in New York City. Voegelin must have seen an opportunity to write a book for an American audience and at the same time to add a work in English to his list of publications, something that would clearly be an asset in planning his professional career in his new homeland. He had just accepted a position as assistant professor at Bennington College, and a two-hundred-page book must have looked like a manageable undertaking.

Instead of accepting a generous renewal of his contract at Bennington, however, Voegelin went to the University of Alabama in the fall of 1939. The new teaching responsibilities as well as such civic obligations as "16 talks in fraternities, veterans' organizations, and women's clubs" took their toll on the progress of the "History," as Voegelin wrote to Morstein Marx in April 1940. While he anticipated the completion of the "ancient period" by the end of the spring semester of that year, the Middle Ages and the modern period could not be completed until the summer, which he would spend in Cambridge, Massachusetts, researching materials on the Middle Ages at Harvard's Widener Library. At Morstein Marx's urging, Voegelin agreed to complete the manuscript by September 1, 1940. Fall and winter came and went, and in April 1941 Morstein Marx again inquired about the state of the book. This time, Voegelin responded with a table of contents for the parts that he considered ready for publication. His letter to Morstein Marx of May 6, 1941, is of interest because it is also a statement about the direction in which his work had been going. A central position in the transition from the Middle Ages to the modern period was held by the

"paragraph" on "The People of God," which gave a "survey (30 MS.-pages) of the movements from the tenth century to the present, which means that it contains the revolution-problem, medieval and modern." "Incidentally," Voegelin continued, "The People of God is in my opinion a very important synthesis of the dynamics of Western ideas, which has never been given in this way."

The author's only worry was that Morstein Marx would find the "unorthodox treatment too much at variance with the expectations of readers who live in the time when Queen Victoria was young and beautiful." By the summer of 1941, however, the delays had become disturbing to Morstein Marx. He was no longer to be placated with optimistic prognoses, because he had seen the earlier outlines and was justifiably concerned that the work was far from being finished. "This is not to be a tome, you know—and the publishers might not like too much delay," he wrote in a brief note on July 31. Voegelin replied with a long letter, dated August 4, 1941. The letter spells out what Voegelin saw himself doing in 1941 and how he labored under the restrictions imposed on him by the textbook format. "I cannot write outrageous nonsense on essential questions and ruin my reputation in order to comply with the picture of the world of the text-book tribe," he says about his dilemma, which had at last reached the critical stage. There was no more point in hiding the problem. The truth was that the project could not be done as a textbook, because the discrepancy between the actual state of "science" and the sorry state of the academic discipline of political theory in America was simply too great. And no amount of "argumentative support of the results" was going to make the book acceptable to his colleagues; this fact was becoming exceedingly clear. The outline of the manuscript with an exact page count of the parts already typed that was attached to the letter was most likely a last-ditch attempt to show Morstein Marx that the book did indeed exist and was eventually going to be published.

Morstein Marx in turn showed that he was quite capable of reading between the lines and of counting manuscript pages. In his response to Voegelin of August 9, he openly mentions what he had previously managed to suppress: the book might no longer fit into the series because it had grown "too fat" and the publisher was now in a position to use the delays as an excuse for dropping the project. In the same breath, Morstein Marx acknowledges "that just this very book is sorely needed" and speaks of his willingness "to hunt

for another publisher myself if. . . ." On August 21, a last appeal went out to Voegelin to send the entire manuscript by late September. It was never sent. Not until the spring of 1944 did Voegelin approach his editor again to tell him the good news that "the 'History' has reached a stage of completion where conversations concerning publication can be started" and that it had now become a three-volume treatise. Would McGraw-Hill still be interested, or could Morstein Marx help find another publisher? Perhaps Macmillan might be interested? On October 4, 1944, Morstein Marx ~~was~~ able to write a letter congratulating his former author on the successful conclusion of a contract with the Macmillan Company. "I am quite serious when I say that the appearance of the work will have historic meaning for the development of political theory in this country." The second phase of the "History" had begun.

### III

It is much more difficult to relate the history of Eric Voegelin's association with his new publisher. Not only did this association last much longer—ten years—but there was as well no sort of linear development of Voegelin's work that can be told as a story with ■ beginning, a middle, and ■■■ end. Rather, the pattern that already had become visible during the first years of the writing of the "History" now became more pronounced. True, it appeared, the conditions of the new association were quite different from those that existed under the agreement with McGraw-Hill. When Voegelin signed his contract with Macmillan on September 27, 1944, he agreed to deliver a three-volume work that had only very few of the restrictions that had made his work on the textbook so difficult. Not only had the editor at Macmillan, Charles Anderson, seen the manuscript for the two completed volumes of the "History," but it was also understood that Voegelin's work would be marketed as an ambitious replacement of the existing standard works on the history of political theory, those by William A. Dunning and George H. Sabine. Furthermore, the time pressure that had hampered Voegelin's first attempt was absent. Major ~~new~~ publishing projects could wait until the end of the war, and thus the author, having finished two-thirds of the work, could turn his attention to the last volume and to revising the two earlier ones. His own professional situation at LSU (where he had been appointed in January 1942) had become

stable, and thus the future of the "History" seemed bright. The publisher expected three volumes of four hundred, five hundred, and six hundred pages, respectively, and was prepared to send the manuscript to outside reviewers for their critical comments.

If one follows only the correspondence between Voegelin and Macmillan, one does not get the impression that anything might go wrong. In October 1945, Voegelin reported that he had made good progress during the summer, having added another two hundred pages to volume 3, "The Modern World"; he was expecting to finish by "the earlier part of 1946." The conclusion of World War II had, in fact, removed any remaining obstacles to publication, be they economic or scholarly, the latter affecting "the final formulation of this or that problem of current interest." Moreover, the author professed a lively interest in "publication at the earliest possible date" for reasons "of my position and career." The real question was whether all three volumes should appear simultaneously or if the work "would make a bigger splash" if individual volumes were published in short intervals. And, Voegelin asks, if the latter was to be the case, should the publication of volume 1 "be delayed longer than absolutely necessary for technical reasons?" This, clearly, is not the voice of a scholar about to change his work, let alone abandon it. Indeed, Macmillan submitted the manuscript for volumes 1 and 2 to an outside reader, Professor Francis W. Coker at Yale. His report came back in April 1946 and proved on the whole very favorable, even though Coker's Anglo-American sensibility was somewhat disturbed by Voegelin's "fondness for finding mystic, mythical, symbolic implications in political writings." Voegelin did not hesitate to write a personal letter to Professor Coker in which he pointed out that this "fondness" was not a mere whim on his part, but a fundamental principle of interpretation that he had developed "after the breakdown of an attempt to write a systematic theory of politics (around 1930)."<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, Voegelin added, not without a touch of irony, there was a new monographic literature by scholars such as Alois Dempf, Erich Przywara, Ortwin de Graeff, and Hans Urs von Balthasar that had set the "scientific standards" for his work.

3. Voegelin to Francis W. Coker, May 1, 1946, Eric Voegelin Papers, Hoover Institution Archives, box 9, file 21. Other cited correspondence and manuscript material is also to be found in this collection of Voegelin's papers, hereafter cited by box and file.

Another review initiated by Macmillan reached Voegelin in February 1948, and that reviewer also saw only the first two volumes. His report was considerably more critical than Coker's and not only suggested major stylistic changes but moreover raised questions about Voegelin's theoretical emphasis on "evocative ideas" and myth. The reviewer clearly cared little for Voegelin's "point of view," which he largely ascribed to his "continental background." He noted, "This point of view is largely unfamiliar to English and American scholars, and probably less familiar to students of government than to students of intellectual history."<sup>4</sup> What Voegelin was up against is most evident in the report's closing paragraph:

It does not seem likely, however, that American or British scholars will develop the somewhat mystical attitude toward such beliefs that seem to be implied especially in Voegelin's account of Plato. So far American scholars have shown themselves more likely to turn to Freud for a reputedly scientific account of the way myths are generated by the Unconscious and projected into human relationships. The "growth of the spiritual substance which determines the contents and scope of the political evocation," or the "spiritual singularity of human spirituality" are not current American ways of talking.

It does not come as a surprise that the reviewer also remained skeptical about the book's sales prospects. Macmillan's editor, Charles Anderson, in transmitting the report, asked Voegelin for his reactions and raised the possibility of putting the three volumes into two books, thus improving the work's marketing chances. Voegelin's response was swift. In seven pages he addressed himself to the questions of the work's organization, style, and "point of view." While not disagreeing with Anderson's idea of two volumes, he made it clear that parts 1 and 2, that is, "The Ancient World" and "The Middle Ages," would have to be bound in one volume, because the volume on the modern period would be as long as the other two together. As to the criticism of his style, Voegelin wryly remarked that such obvious authorities as Robert Heilman and Cleanth Brooks agreed "that the style is excellent English."

In the absence of any definition of what the Reporter considers idiomatic or unidiomatic I consider it a possibility that, what impresses him as unidiomatic, is the philosophical language of the

4. "Report on Voegelin's HISTORY OF POLITICAL IDEAS," p. 4, box 24, file 8.

treatise. There is, for instance, the author's complaint about "the use of words in unfamiliar senses" (giving no examples). It is possible that the Report's complaint is literally justified: the senses of the words are unfamiliar to him. That does not mean, however, that they are unfamiliar to the English language.<sup>5</sup>

The task of dismantling the reviewer's criticisms about Voegelin's "point of view" and his predictions concerning the book's sale proved to be even easier. To the reviewer's remarks about this point of view's unfamiliarity to English and American scholars, Voegelin had some rather caustic responses:

I can only say: I hope so—what sense would there be in writing and publishing a book if the reader can find only things in it which are familiar to him already? The Report goes on: this point of view "is probably less familiar to students of government than to students of intellectual history." Again: this is quite true; political science has become somewhat of an intellectual backwater; it is high time that somebody makes the profession familiar with what is going on in the world.<sup>6</sup>

There are no records of any correspondence between Macmillan and Voegelin for several years. We know that during the intervening time Voegelin saw Charles Anderson at least once, in March 1949 when Anderson was in Baton Rouge. At that time, Waldemar Gurian, the editor of the *Review of Politics*, wanted to publish chapters from the "History," and Voegelin received Anderson's permission to "prepublish" the sections on Machiavelli, Bodin, and Marx. As Voegelin put it to Gurian, Macmillan considered such a publication a form of advertisement.<sup>7</sup> Subsequent years did in fact see the publication of those parts of the "History" mentioned earlier as well as *The New Science of Politics*, published in 1952. When the correspondence resumed, with a letter from Anderson to Voegelin dated October 20, 1953, it had also entered its final phase. Anderson had hoped to see Voegelin during another visit to Louisiana, but Voegelin had been teaching that summer at the University of Southern California. His inquiry about the state of the manuscript was answered promptly. In a detailed letter, Voegelin told Anderson that the work should have a new title, "Order and Symbols," for

5. "Observations on the 'Report on Voegelin's History of Political Ideas,'" box 24, file 8.

6. Ibid., p. 7.

7. Voegelin to Waldemar Gurian, March 8, 1949, box 15, file 27.

the "older title (History of Political Ideas) is inadequate, because the liberal ideology on which it was based is by now exploded in critical science by the development of the experiences of order and their adequate symbolization." Voegelin then explained the composition of the three volumes:

The first volume deals with the three great symbolic forms developed in antiquity, that is, with Myth, History, and Philosophy; it closes with Aristotle. The second volume begins with Alexander, and deals with the respective orders of Empire and Christianity, down to the time of their crisis in the Reformation. The third volume is a systematic unit insofar ■ it deals with the development of Modern Gnosis and its crisis in our time. The sequence of subject-matter, thus is no longer a simple string of authors and ideas in time.<sup>8</sup>

He approximated the number of manuscript pages: for volume 1, 1,450; for the subsequent volumes, 1,200 and 1,800 each.

Nearly eight months later, Voegelin was able to announce to Anderson that the manuscript "now really is coming" and installments were being sent to the publisher.<sup>9</sup> But by that time ■ significant shift had taken place in the editorial rooms at Macmillan. Henry McCurdy, the executive editor of the College Department, had taken personal charge of Voegelin's project, and he did not hesitate to point out that the new format of the "History" bore no resemblance to the one contracted for in 1944.<sup>10</sup> Voegelin immediately tried to clarify the situation. His contact with Charles Anderson had been mostly in the form of personal conversations over the years, and it was to Anderson that he explained the manuscript's increasing size. The time had come to summarize those explanations: "The history of ideas, as ■ science, has undergone radical changes during the last decade. The changes pertain (1) to the increase of materials to be covered, and (2) to the development of methods in treating materials." The works of Werner Jaeger and Olof Gignon, the six volumes of Arnold Toynbee's *Study of History*, and, above all, the Chicago Oriental Institute's studies on Egyptian and Mesopotamian history were among the most important landmarks of these changes. "Moreover, I myself have learned ■ few things in the course of the work, as you may see from my New

8. Voegelin to Charles D. Anderson, October 25, 1953, box 24, file 8.

9. Voegelin to Anderson, June 7, 1954, box 24, file 8.

10. Henry B. McCurdy to Voegelin, June 30, 1954, box 24, file 8.

*Science of Politics* which has come out in the meanwhile," Voegelin added almost as an afterthought. Despite all that, he insisted, the nature and intention of the work had not changed: "It is still a history of political ideas, as competently as possible representing the present state of science. The trouble is that the state of science in this field, as represented by me, has gone up substantially during the last ten years. What you get as the result of the labor, is a standard treatise on the subject that runs no danger of finding a rival in less than a generation."<sup>11</sup>

Voegelin obviously had to walk a very fine line. On the one hand, he was trying to persuade his publisher that the work for which he had originally been contracted was the one he was going to deliver, albeit in a vastly increased size. On the other hand, the Voegelin who spoke here as an advocate of his work was a scholar who was very much aware of what he had achieved and who was asking his editor to appreciate the merits of this work, regardless of the difficulties its publication might present. Most important—and this takes us beyond the scope of recounting the external circumstances of the work's development—Voegelin knew that the addition of a new part on Israel had given the work an entirely new dimension, which "will make it a 'must' in theological seminaries and for reverends, because (though that may sound almost unbelievable) no book on the political ideas of Israel has ever been written at all. Besides the Part on Israel is particularly well written and should, therefore, appeal to a general public that is interested in Jewish history." There was, finally, the "expansion of the pre-Socratic history, and especially the new interpretation of Homer," which would make the volume a "must" in classical studies.<sup>12</sup>

McCurdy's reply offered a conference with Voegelin, who was going to pass through New York on his way to Cambridge, Massachusetts, for the summer. "I am obliged to say, however," McCurdy added, "that the information you have given presents a matter of real concern to me."<sup>13</sup> The conference took place, and it becomes clear from the ensuing correspondence that Voegelin put up a stiff fight for his book. While this has relatively little anecdotal significance, it is important for our understanding of the genesis of

11. Voegelin to McCurdy, July 5, 1954, box 24, file 8.

12. Ibid.

13. McCurdy to Voegelin, July 9, 1954, box 24, file 8.



*Order and History*. Not only did the editors suggest that the book be moved from the College Department to the Trade Department, but they also suggested a different arrangement of the three volumes. Voegelin wanted to be flexible, as long as his work would receive an audience, an audience that he could now define very well: not merely college students and their professors, but "political scientists, philosophers, classicists, theologians, etc."<sup>14</sup> This time, the editors took their time in answering Voegelin's letter. They must have known that they had reached a stage where they had to either commit themselves to sailing uncharted waters or tell Voegelin that they no longer had a contract with him. Henry McCurdy, consequently, left no doubt that the latter was the case. In assigning the future fate of the book to Macmillan's Trade Department, he had made the decision.<sup>15</sup> Voegelin knew that the "History" would most likely not be published by Macmillan, for in his response of September 21, 1954, he stated: "In case the decision should be negative, I shall send you a New York address to which I beg you to forward the MS." He did not have to wait long. On October 11, McCurdy sent the final word: "In view of our long association, we regret that your work is not to bear our imprint. We shall, however, look forward to its publication with every wish for its success."<sup>16</sup>

The forwarding address Voegelin had given to Macmillan was that of Helen Wolff, who, together with her husband, Kurt Wolff, was then running Pantheon Books. The correspondence between Helen Wolff and Eric Voegelin perhaps sheds more light on the eventual transition from "History of Political Ideas" to "Order and Symbols"—or *Order and History*, as the published volumes were to be called—than any other documents. For the transition from one to the other was anything but an abrupt abandonment of what, in view of the text that comprises the volumes following this introduction, is the very core of Eric Voegelin's life work. Rather, it was a gradual recognition, on Voegelin's part, that he had indeed completed the

14. Voegelin to Harry H. Cloudman, Cambridge, Mass., August 20, 1954, box 24, file 8.

15. "I am therefore, submitting, with your approval, your manuscript for volume one together with the table of contents for volume two to our Trade Department for their consideration. I will, at the same time, attach your letter of August 20 to Mr. Cloudman in which you have given some suggestions regarding possible publication of your manuscript in more than two volumes" (McCurdy to Voegelin, September 17, 1954, box 24, file 8).

16. McCurdy to Voegelin, October 11, 1954, box 24, file 8.

central portion of this work, except that it was no longer a history of political ideas, as he had steadfastly told his Macmillan editors, but a *history of consciousness*. This theme will be resumed in part V of this Introduction.

While the Wolffs were beating the bushes to find funding for this monumental work, looking, among other possibilities, at the Bollingen Series, Voegelin was equally busy looking at ways of cutting the manuscript down to a publishable size. At the Wolffs' suggestion, he submitted it to Oxford University Press; at the same time, he was ready to preserve the manuscript as much as possible or, better, to preserve its very core. By February 1955, he was able to make a new proposal to Helen Wolff:

But I have thought over the matter in the meanwhile, and I wonder whether it would not be the best way to get around the difficulties of a vast project by dissecting the whole work into its major component parts and to publish them separately. This thought suggested itself particularly, because in the course of this fall I have completed the study on Moses which was still missing in the MS you have seen (I left a gap in the pagination, where it would fit), with results beyond my best expectations. Now that this gap is filled, it turns out that I have completed in fact a study of the Exodus problem, that is, of the emergence of Israel in historical form from the cosmological civilization of Egypt.

What follows is nothing less than the admission that the entire weight of the work had shifted.

Hence, I consider now the possibility of publishing the study of Israel separately. It is a manuscript of about 550 pages, even in decent format and printing it should be possible to keep it under 400 pages in print. If I can get that block out of the whole work, I [could] have the Greek part published again separately. Perhaps even Macmillan would take it after all as the first volume of a two-volume history of political ideas.<sup>17</sup>

Voegelin even suggested possible titles for the projected volume, such as " 'Israel and History,' or 'Exodus. The Creation of History through Israel,' or 'From Myth to History.' " A few days before, he had written to the editor of Oxford University Press and enclosed a description of the manuscript he was submitting. It will not come as a surprise that the formal description does not tell the entire story as well as does the letter itself. For it is there that Voegelin

17. Voegelin to Helen Wolff, February 14, 1955, box 42, file 15.

really throws caution to the winds and describes the nature of the work:

The work in question is ■ study on the history and philosophy of symbolic forms of order. It is supposed to be entitled *Order and Symbols*. The first part of the study, an independent work, is now finished. It deals with the systematically and chronologically first three symbolic forms, that is, with *Myth, History, and Philosophy*. The remainder of the study is substantially finished, but will require two or three more years to be fit for publication. It will deal with the second set of symbolic forms, that is, with *Empire, Christianity, and Gnosis*. It will again be an independent work and, therefore, is of no further importance for the present question.<sup>18</sup>

The reader of Voegelin's *Order and History* and his later published works will easily recognize the pattern that had evolved ■■ the central concern of his mature work. The two sets of symbolic orders shaped his later thought, with empire becoming the most important one, dealt with at length in *The Ecumenic Age*, volume IV of *Order and History*. When Voegelin approached his former publisher one last time in this matter, he excluded the volume on Israel from consideration and submitted ■ proposal for three volumes with the following titles:

1. Polis and Philosophy (Greece to 300 B.C.)
2. Empire and Christianity (from 300 B.C. to A.D. 1500)
3. The Gnostic Age (from A.D. 1500 to the present)

Again the task of rejecting Voegelin's proposal fell to Henry McCurdy. The history of the "History" ended with this paragraph:

From the start we have been thinking that your projected work would replace the Dunning volumes as a standard reference work as well ■■ a text for ~~courses~~ in political theory, but in our judgment, which is based on the material we have seen, your work would not serve the purpose we have had in mind without considerable revision and reorganization of the whole project. Furthermore we do not think dismemberment, which you have suggested, would do. Your volumes have a tight theoretical framework, which is the result of your many years of study and work in this field, and to a considerable degree the meaning of the parts depends upon an understanding of the whole frame of reference, which we think is too intellectually sophisticated for undergraduate and many graduate students. To reach them we believe that the whole work would have to be recast, but in doing so your own original contribution

18. Voegelin to William Oman, February 9, 1955, box 28, file 5.

to political theory would thus actually be played down or perhaps deleted. In view, therefore, of the possible result it follows that your important contributions would be presented in ■ form to receive the attention they merit if you left the work essentially untouched and arranged for its publication abroad as you suggest.<sup>19</sup>

On May 25, 1955, Voegelin signed a contract with Louisiana State University Press for ■ work entitled "Order and Symbols." Four days later, he wrote ■ letter to the director of the press, Donald Ellegood, in which he offered one amendment: "Concerning a title, I have to make the following suggestion: 'The Symbols of Order and the Order of History.' " The press might have had a fortunate hand in the final form of the title.

#### IV

As we have pointed out, the story of the publication of the "History" is not the complete story. The real story of the "History" emerges from Voegelin's correspondence with his friends and colleagues. For the author of the "History" and of *Order and History* was not ■ loner. Long before he came to America, he had made it a point to be ■ part of ■ circle of friends who either had interests similar to his own or possessed the kind of background and judgment that enabled them to be critical readers of his work. Thus, when the Voegelins arrived in the United States in the middle of 1938, they not only had friends there already but were soon followed by others who became readers, listeners, and critics, just as they had been in Vienna before. Among them were the historian Friedrich Engel-Janosi and the social theorist and philosopher Alfred Schütz, as well as the lawyers Maximilian Mintz and Eduard von Winternitz, to name only those with whom Voegelin was most closely associated before and during his years in America and who had been part of the "Geistkreis" in Vienna, which included besides Voegelin the economists Gottfried von Haberler, Friedrich von Hayek, and Oskar Morgenstern. Leaving the European makeup of this circle of friends aside, it is probably fair to say that Voegelin showed his work to anyone who was interested, and he accepted criticism gladly whenever it pertained to scholarly details or principal theoretical questions. Thus, the circle of people who saw at least parts of the

19. McCurdy to Voegelin, March 25, 1955, box 28, file 5.

"History" came to include the American literary scholars Robert Heilman and Cleanth Brooks as well as Leo Strauss and Karl Löwith, together with others to whom his manuscripts were passed by friends. The correspondence with several of these friends, most notably that between Voegelin and Friedrich Engel-Janosi, Alfred Schütz, Max Mintz, and, to lesser extent, Leo Strauss and Karl Löwith, stresses different aspects of the work in progress, oscillating among the historical, the political, and the philosophical.<sup>20</sup> From the first mention of finished chapters of his book in a letter to Alfred Schütz in March 1939 through a letter to Friedrich Engel-Janosi in December 1955, the correspondence offers remarkable insights into the theoretical and material questions that shaped the revisions of the manuscript over the years and that ultimately resulted in the three volumes that were published as *Order and History*. The general nature of this Introduction does not allow for a detailed account of this correspondence; in its place, a brief synoptic overview will help to guide the reader through the various stages of the development of the "History."

Even though the correspondence, the extant tables of contents, and the actual typescript give an unusually detailed picture of the development of the "History," the manuscript cannot be completely reconstructed. Too much material was culled out of especially the first volume to be able to say with certainty what the manuscript submitted to Macmillan actually looked like. Nor have the editors been able to find a copy of the complete introduction, which, as we know from Voegelin's correspondence, was sent to several people, among them Maximilian Mintz, Alfred Schütz, and Karl Löwith, and was included in the manuscript submitted to the publisher. What does remain is an eight-page handwritten manuscript of an introduction that dates back to the early months of 1940. That introduction, which is reproduced as Appendix A in the present volume, is followed by two sets of handwritten manuscripts, each of which contains chapters whose headings are identical with the chapter headings of the later typescript. These two manuscripts are, however, considerably shorter than the typescript versions, and even without having a complete transcription at this

20. The correspondence between Strauss and Voegelin is comprehensively gathered in *Faith and Political Philosophy: The Correspondence between Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin, 1934-1964*, trans. and ed. Peter Emberley and Barry Cooper (University Park, Pa., 1993).

point, it appears most likely that the holograph represents if not *the* original version of the "History" then at least one of the earliest. This assumption is further corroborated by the fact that the first set of handwritten chapters comprises, in addition to the introduction, ninety-nine pages on the ancient Orient and Greece, equivalents of which are not to be found in the typescript. Of particular interest is the section on Plato, not more than twenty pages in length, with four parts entitled "The Myths of Plato," "The Polis of Plato," "The Nomoi of Plato," and "The Eros of Plato." Similarly, the second set, beginning with "From Alexander to Actium," is a highly condensed version of the later typescript. Altogether, even this ostensibly early holograph already comprises approximately nine hundred pages and clearly shows that the conception of the "History" remained fundamentally unchanged from its inception. What did change was its breadth and depth.

As significant as these findings are, their detailed presentation will have to be part of a future critical edition of Voegelin's writings. They do not essentially alter our perception of the text that appears here as *History of Political Ideas*. What is at issue is whether Voegelin was engaged, from the very beginning, in writing a systematic work rather than a college textbook.

## V

A question that has preoccupied not only the editors of the *Collected Works* but also many students of Eric Voegelin's thought is one that was repeatedly addressed by Voegelin in his later years while he was continuing work on *Order and History*. In light of what we know of the genesis of the "History," Voegelin's remarks concerning the "abandonment" of the "History" seem not to clarify the complex process that led to the changes in the project but rather to obscure the issues for readers who have not had the opportunity to study either the 1930s writings or the manuscript of the "History." Thus, a categorical remark such as that in *Autobiographical Reflections* (which dates from 1973) may put the reader on the wrong track. When Voegelin says, "I had to give up 'ideas' as objects of a history and establish the experience of reality—personal, social, historical, cosmic—as the reality to be explored historically,"<sup>21</sup> he

21. *Autobiographical Reflections*, 80. For the analysis in this section I am indebted to Jürgen Gebhardt.

seems to claim that "ideas," whether political or not, are obsolete, because they represent defunct theoretical approaches to reality—that is, they are the last vestiges of that artificial split in reality which ruled Western "science" from Descartes to the various neo-Kantian methodologies.

But if "ideas" are not objects of theoretical explorations, we must ask ourselves why the author of the "History of Political Ideas" insisted to his publisher until the end that he was indeed delivering such a history and why in his correspondence throughout the 1940s there are no traces of any conscious, deliberate abandonment of the original project, but only signs of an enhancement, a deepening of what had been begun in 1939. Could it be that "political ideas" were carried through Voegelin's work well past the changes that led to *Order and History*, but that they underwent perhaps a reduction in status, that they were moved from the center to the periphery of the theoretical inquiry? Several signs speak for such a development, but in order to be able to read those signs, the student of Voegelin's thought must seriously ask: what precisely was meant by "political idea" when Voegelin first agreed to write its history? It is not surprising that the most systematic attempt to answer this question will be found in the introduction to the original version of the "History." This text existed as early as March 1940, as we know from a letter in which Max Mintz discussed several points in Voegelin's understanding of political ideas and political theory.<sup>22</sup> What makes this introduction particularly important is not just that it represents Voegelin's earliest theoretical statement concerning the subject and method of his "History." Rather, it is the continuity of problems and their formulations in Voegelin's work since the early 1930s that strikes the reader, and it is this continuity that deserves our attention.

The organization of Voegelin's introduction to the entire "History" (see Appendix A) permits the conclusion that it was directed to an audience of lay people, and there is no indication that the text as it is presented here for the first time was an unfinished fragment. It rather appears that Voegelin retained this introduction throughout the 1940s and only later may have added additional sections

22. Cf. Max Mintz to Voegelin, March 22, 1940, box 25, file 23. A verbatim quote in this letter indicates that Mintz was referring to a typewritten version of the text presented here in Appendix A.

to highlight specific new results of his work on the "History," as he prepared it for publication in the 1950s. This later typewritten version unfortunately seems to have been lost.

It is clear that Voegelin's concern in the introduction found in Appendix A was only secondarily historical. Instead, the focus of this text is on the reality of the "idea" in the formation of political societies. The question posed is whether political societies represent ■ truth that legitimizes their existence or whether the political is ultimately little more than an imaginative construct that has no ontological foundation. In some respects, this introduction bears a strong resemblance to the preface with which Voegelin, fifteen years later, opened *Israel and Revelation*, volume I of *Order and History*. For what is at stake is nothing less than the "primordial community of being," with, however, one major difference: *the partnership in the cosmic community has not yet become a partnership*. Rather, the whole burden of making sense of his life rests on man. In order to make sense of his life, to guard against the disintegrating forces from without and within, and thus find shelter from these destructive forces, man creates government and thus enters into the imaginative process of creating political order in analogy to the whole that surrounds him, the cosmos. Thus comes into being that "little world of order," the "cosmion." The term, borrowed from the Austrian philosopher Adolf Stöhr and his book *Wege des Glaubens*, was never abandoned by Voegelin, because it raises to consciousness a fundamental fact about all societies: they are, even in their most secularized form, analogous to man's imaginative vision of the cosmos.<sup>23</sup>

Years later, in ■ letter to Alfred Schütz, Voegelin made reference to the origin of the term *cosmion* and declared it equivalent to the term *subuniverse*, coined by William James and made the object of one of Schütz's own major theoretical texts, the paper entitled "On Multiple Realities."<sup>24</sup> The cosmion, whose function it is to simulate the wholeness of the cosmos by analogy and thus to act as "shelter" against the forces of disintegration, is always ■

23. Adolf Stöhr, *Wege des Glaubens* (Vienna and Leipzig, 1921). This work was reprinted in *Philosophische Konstruktionen und Reflexionen*, ed. Franz Austeda (Vienna, 1974).

24. In a letter to Schütz dated October 6, 1945 (box 34, file 10), Voegelin specifically refers to his introduction and claims that he based his "History" on the meaning of the subuniverse of political action. The reference to Stöhr's book appears in this context.



product of the human imagination, but since it manifests itself in history as real political societies with real political and social institutions, it leaves a historical trail of rationalizations of its shelter function, a trail made up of "what are commonly called political ideas." Voegelin detected three "sets of ideas" within the permanent structure of political ideas, which in retrospect can be said to have guided his own inquiry into the historical dimension of political ideas: "the ideas concerning the constitution of the cosmos as a whole; the ideas concerning the internal order; the ideas concerning the status of the cosmion in the simultaneous world and in history." These sets of fundamental ideas, in turn, undergo variations that have determined the more specific ideas concerning man, "the religious, metaphysical, and ethical ideas of the meaning of human life," as well as other factors, such as economics, science, and tradition.

As much as the political cosmion is designed to "create a world of meaning" that is ultimately to endow the "fragmentary personal life" with meaning as well, Voegelin also stresses the alternatives to "the finite cosmos of meaning" supported by political ideas, those "fundamental answers to the experience of the fragmentary and senseless character of human existence" that are found in the monastic and anchoritic attitudes that became particularly important in Western Christianity during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and "influenced decisively the whole pattern of Western political attitudes up to the present." Here the reader may perhaps find the heart not only of the introduction but of the intellectual structure of the "History" as a whole. Voegelin the political scientist, who had been tracking political ideas ever since the 1920s and found them, among others, in the race idea and in the idea of *equality*, the subject of the abandoned *Herrschaftslehre*, understood long before he sat down to write his "History of Political Ideas" that the ideas that constitute a substantial part of the political cosmion and give meaning and institutional shelter to the individual life do so at a very high price: the price of the truth of human existence. The human beings who inhabit the cosmion forget that they are functioning in a finite cosmic analogy and not in the absoluteness of the cosmos. Any system of political ideas, Voegelin argues, must devote itself to solutions to this conflict between finiteness and absoluteness, and the measure of its historical substance is the extent to which it succeeds in resolving this conflict. From the polytheistic

systems of representing the divine through the mediation of kingship to the more complex solutions of monotheistic systems such as the "incorporation of the political function into the charismatic order of the body of Christ in the Carolingian empire," the aim has always been the linking of the finite with the absolute. Only in our time has the substitution of the *cosmion* for the *cosmos* taken such extreme forms as we find in nationalism, the racist ideologies of National Socialism, or the totalitarian systems of Communism. The elimination of the apolitical realm of experience in modern political systems is "an attempt to create an absolute *cosmos* out of the finite forces of human desire and will" and for this reason "may be called magic."

This central insight into the dilemma of the existential representative function of the political *cosmion* had been evolving as one of the main elements of Voegelin's political thought throughout his life, and it links the "History" with his later work. But from this insight also derived the methodological approach that set the "History" on its precarious course and necessitated the repeated revisions that ultimately led to the break with its original conception, the thesis that claims, "The political idea is only to a limited extent descriptive of any reality; its primary function is not a cognitive but a formative one. The political idea is not an instrument of description of a political unit but an instrument of its creation." When Voegelin speaks of the "magic" of the political idea, he does not mean to make a vague metaphorical comparison. Instead, with full knowledge of what his claim implies, he argues that the political idea is a powerful symbol capable of conjuring up, of calling into existence, the *cosmion* and its parts in the same way primitive magic effects an immediate ontic relation between a name and an object the name denotes. Creating the political *cosmion* and symbolizing the relationships between ruler and ruled is an act of evocation, as Voegelin called this magic process throughout the years of his work on the "History." This understanding of the nature of the political idea is so central to the theoretical framework of the "History" that it forms the basis for the introduction to the last part of the work and the reflections on "phenomenalism" — the formative characteristic of modernity. In substituting phenomenal for substantial reality, modern man has in fact changed reality, and the horror of the nuclear bomb that underlies the conclusion of the chapter on Schelling and Hölderlin was only the most recent and

most real manifestation of the magic act of substitution that is also at the basis of any act of evocation.<sup>25</sup>

Voegelin's emphasis on the "reality-character" of the political idea by no means exhausts the theoretical problems of the "History." On the contrary, by claiming that political ideas have their own status in reality as its constituents, Voegelin opens up a whole gamut of questions regarding the role of the political thinker and the role of theory in describing and analyzing the reality constituted by the ideas. The main part of his introduction is therefore devoted to the dialectics of idea and theory. For, political ideas are the result of evocative acts, solidifying what Voegelin during the years of working on the "History" used to call "sentiments" and what he would later call "experiences," political theory is the practice of contemplative analysis. As such, theory "has to explain the cosmos as what it is, as a magical entity," and in doing so it uncovers the relativity of the cosmos and the ideas that sustain it with their claim of providing "an absolute shelter of meaning." We cannot stress enough the fundamental importance of Voegelin's understanding of theory—that is, of contemplative analysis. It is nothing less than the experience that underlies his self-understanding as a political scientist from his earliest years as an emerging independent thinker to the time when the very question of contemplative theory became thematic in the process of writing the "History." Thus, truly theoretical contemplation puts the theorist at odds with his society and its ideas, because he is essentially engaged in undoing the imaginative, magic web of ideas and institutions when he begins to ask questions about their meaning. Consequently, political theory can itself not be a community-creating practice but is a lonely pursuit in which the theorist engages in spite of his own social and political ties to the concrete society of which he is part. "Political theory," so Voegelin states categorically, "has hardly a chance to be developed otherwise than by the efforts of outstanding individuals; it is almost

25. Voegelin, in a letter to Schütz dated September 17, 1945 (box 34, file 10), just a few weeks after the dropping of the two nuclear bombs on Japan, answers Schütz's question of "how on the basis of phenomenological assumptions hundreds of thousands can lose their lives": "It is on this complex of problems that the entire 'History' is based. Ideas, and especially political ideas, are not theoretical propositions about reality, but they are themselves constituents of reality. This reality-character of the idea I dealt with in the introduction to Volume I, under the title of 'Evocation.'"

impossible to advance it by a cooperative effort of scholars, by tradition in schools, or by gradual elaboration of problems through continuous generations of scholars." And with more than a trace of fundamental skepticism, Voegelin puts his finger on the reason for this timeless problem: the lack of social consent. "It is unimaginable that any political society would support, or even tolerate, an intellectual enterprise that questions the value of its cosmic analogy—at least no political society in history has ever done so." Therefore, the deepest, the most radical thoughts of the political theorist are ultimately uncommunicable. That Voegelin had not just come across this insight apropos his work on the "History" is clearly evident in his earlier theoretical works as well as in his shorter public pronouncements on matters of freedom of opinion and censorship during his years in Austria.<sup>26</sup>

What then, the reader may ask, compelled Voegelin not only to continue his theoretical work of describing the enchanted political cosmions of his time with an Aristotelian habit of contemplation but also to embark on an attempt to discover patterns of history that link these cosmions in some mysterious way? There are several answers to this question, and while none of them can claim to be definitive, they all go to the heart of what Voegelin attempted in the "History" and why he maintained the strong ambivalence concerning its final achievement. We must first of all note that already in his introduction the author's skepticism about political ideas and the political cosmion must be seen in the context of a philosophical culture that comprehends that political sphere as a part of the larger realities of human existence. "The problem of politics has to be considered in the larger setting of an interpretation of human nature," the introduction states unequivocally. It is for this reason that the conflict between political idea and political theory, between evocation and detachment, cannot be made the object of another theory that would attempt to resolve it and thus become a program for political action. Rather, the conflict is itself evidence of the existential uncertainty that again and again calls for

26. The question of contemplative theory and the theorist's public silence became the subject of an interesting exchange between Mintz and Voegelin. In the letter of March 22, 1940, Mintz had noted the passage in the introduction where Voegelin muses on the need for secrecy, and the author's response—in a letter dated April 11, 1940 (box 25, file 23)—goes even more deeply into the dilemma that already faced Plato. Likewise, Voegelin had already dealt with this problem at some length in an article that appeared in the Vienna paper *Neue Freie Presse* in 1937.

the imaginative evocations that are meant to assuage our anxieties and give ■■ ■ tentative foothold in reality.

Moreover, Voegelin's specific interest always lay in the "systematic" presentation of his subject matter, so that he understood from the initial work on the "History" that, as he put it to Mintz, "as far ■■ 'History' and 'Theory' are concerned, I am now more and more inclined to believe that the two, at least with regard to the subject of political 'Theory,' cannot be separated."<sup>27</sup> Thus, what concerned Voegelin perhaps more than the evocative nature of political ideas itself was the question of whether these ideas constituted a meaningful pattern, ■ pattern that, due to the irrational origins of the ideas, had to be different from the accepted "single line of evolution" that characterized the traditional histories of political ideas. To summarize this state of affairs, Voegelin wrote:

A catalog of evocative ideas, . . . and a continuity of theoretical contemplation, does not exist. But long periods of history are covered by the same basic types of evocation, and within such periods the contemplative process will culminate in one or more outstanding theoretical attempts at systematizing the material of the period. A history will, then, have to show the gradual growth of theory out of ■■ evocative situation; it will have to lead up to the limits reached within a situation of that kind; and, then, show the dissolution and [abandonment] of theoretical thought under the pressure of new evocations. (See Appendix A, p. 235)

The strict "scientific" inquiry into the historical dimension, we may conclude, constituted for Voegelin the best antidote to the charm that evocative ideas may exert on even the most theoretical mind. Consequently, Voegelin's retrospective claim that he had to give up ideas as objects of ■ history takes on a different meaning. Because we have an almost weekly account of the growth of the "History" through Voegelin's correspondence, we ■■ able to trace the changes it underwent in the final phase. Voegelin rewrote, enlarged, and revised key parts, such as the parts on Plato, Aristotle, the People of God, Bodin, and finally Vico, but did he in fact alter the basic pattern of the "History"? For this pattern, as the above quote shows, started out as ■ complex of evocation and theory—an interactive pattern, to put the matter more succinctly. And this interactive pattern, systematic and yet nonsystematic, emerges gradually as ■ fundamental reality in its own right, as a structure

27. Voegelin to Mintz, April 11, 1940, box 25, file 23.

of consciousness, as Voegelin would call this later. It ~~was~~ clearly during his intense study of Schelling's work for the section of the "History" entitled "Last Orientation" that the nature of this pattern and its emergence in consciousness took on ever greater urgency. What really occurs when the theorist realizes that he cannot treat the evocations as phenomena, that he must see them as part of the fundamental human substance? It is not without deeper meaning that "Last Orientation" opens with a section on modernity and "Phenomenalism" that Voegelin, on Schütz's suggestion, later considered placing elsewhere.

It is to be suspected that Voegelin's awareness of the complexities of the relationship between evocations and theory was sharpened by the study of the Middle Ages and the ~~essence~~ of medieval Christianity that had become necessary, because, as he wrote to Schütz about the positioning of the section "Phenomenalism," he did not know enough about the Middle Ages to write the relevant parts with the same ease as he could those on the ancient world and the modern age. Voegelin's complex relationship to Christianity, so much discussed, makes perhaps more sense if it is put into the context of his merging understanding of myth and consciousness, in other words, his differentiation of the areas of evocation and contemplation. For Christianity is perhaps the one movement in history in which the evocative reality of cosmic analogy and the philosophical freedom of the person to contemplate this evocative reality entered into a union that achieved the greatest possible balance between the two. There is ample evidence that Voegelin genuinely regretted the inability of Christianity to maintain and develop this precarious balance and that he saw his own role as a philosopher to be not in restoring but in initiating a new understanding of this balance.<sup>28</sup> In the tradition of the "spiritual realists" from Dante to Nietzsche, Voegelin saw his own role determined by a millennial process that had begun in the twelfth century and that had by no means come to an end. In the part of the "History" entitled "The Church and the Nations," he wrote half a century

28. An eloquent testimony to this self-understanding of Voegelin's is to be found in a May 11, 1951, letter to Friedrich Engel-Janosi (box 11, file 8) in which he writes at the end of a long paragraph on the failure of the church to adapt to changing historical circumstances: "Sometimes I have the feeling that my intellectual accomplishment for the church's problematic cultural situation (*Kulturproblematik*) is greater than the accomplishments of the professionals, whose job it is supposed to be."

ago: "Since the time of Dante the spiritual realist is faced with the problem that the surrounding political reality of the Western world no longer can adequately absorb the spirit into its public institutions. The incision in Western history corresponds to the time of Heraclitus in Hellenic civilization" ("The Church and the Nations," B5, 327; 536f.).<sup>29</sup> The "History," although not Voegelin's last word on our present and on history, nevertheless demonstrates, step by step as it were, how, past Nietzsche's nihilism, we can regain reality without dogma.

Before turning to a more detailed discussion of the actual historical patterns that emerged during the Middle Ages and that constitute the foundations of modernity, we must return once more to the question of the political idea and its relationship to reality as it unfolds in history. Voegelin's discussion of the nature of the political idea in his overall introduction, which stresses the idea's evocative character, stays within the limits of what could be called a phenomenological analysis. Thus, his later contention that he did indeed abandon the notion of writing a history of ideas demands to be taken seriously. What did Voegelin mean when he repeatedly said he was forced to give up writing a history of political ideas, when he continued to tell his publisher that he was submitting such a history, even if it was not going to be a conventional one? It remains true that there are evocative political ideas that create political reality, as Voegelin had stated to Schütz; but political reality is not exhausted by that aspect of it that articulates itself as ideas. "I understood that ideas are nonsense." Voegelin, as late as 1983, somewhat harshly formulated this change in his thinking; he added: "there are no ideas as such and there is no history of ideas; but there is a history of experiences which can express themselves in various forms, as myths of various types, as philosophical development, theological development, and so on."<sup>30</sup>

Under the impact of working again through Schelling's philosophy, Voegelin appears to have experienced not so much a sudden

29. The manuscript pagination follows that given by Voegelin as the binders (B) stood on the shelf of his study in 1985. The number following the semicolon in this and in subsequent references is to the comprehensive pagination of the typescript in the Eric Voegelin Institute's copy of the "History."

30. Eric Voegelin, "Autobiographical Statement at Age Eighty-Two," in *The Beginning and the Beyond: Papers from the Gadamer and Voegelin Conferences*, ed. Fred Lawrence (Chico, Calif., 1984), 119.

conversion—there is no evidence of it in the correspondence—as ■ slow shifting away from the emphasis on evocation and theory that had guided the conception of the “History” until then. As he explicitly states in *Autobiographical Reflections*, Voegelin soon realized that the actual symbolizations he was studying—for instance, Egyptian coronation rituals and Sumerian New Year festivals—simply could not be considered ideas, but it would have been equally off the mark to call them evocations. By his own admission, Voegelin did not yet know exactly how our understanding of “ideas” is shaped by the Stoic notion of the *koinai ennoiai*, those common, self-evident opinions criticized by Locke in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.<sup>31</sup> The terminology to describe symbolizations other than evocative ideas and theoretical concepts required the kind of rethinking that characterizes Voegelin’s later work but that could be initiated by reflecting on precisely the problems that led Schelling to write *Philosophie der Mythologie* and *Philosophie der Offenbarung*. What are “myth” and “revelation” if not evidence of ■ plurality of symbolisms that themselves reflect a plurality of experiences that ■■ capable only of symbolic expression and must not be transformed into ideas? That is, they ■■ concepts “which are assumed to refer to a reality other than the reality experienced. And this reality,” Voegelin states categorically, “other than the reality experienced does not exist.”<sup>32</sup>

There can be no doubt that the change in the conception of the “History” was a complex process that dates at least as far back as the anamnestic experiments of 1943 and became the subject of extensive conversations and correspondences with Schütz. It was the result of Voegelin’s turning to a philosophy of consciousness that touches on problems articulated in the phenomenological discussions but ultimately goes beyond these problems. There is an interesting document that shows just how far Voegelin’s thinking had advanced by 1947. In ■ letter to an old acquaintance who had asked why the Chinese yin and yang symbols should be considered elements of a nature myth that explained spiritual contexts, Voegelin responded:

You ask: what kind of explanation does such a nature myth offer to the understanding of spiritual connections [*geistige Zusammenhänge*]? . . . What else is a nature myth if not a projection of

31. *Autobiographical Reflections*, 63 ff.

32. *Ibid.*, 78.



a human, psychic process? What else *could* it be but a spiritual connection? That precisely is the meaning of myths for *Geisteswissenschaft*: they provide us with the reflections of spiritual connections which elude us on a rationally differentiated level. The Anselmian *credo ut intelligam* and the Thomistic *cognitio fidei* specifically formulate the principle "knowledge through *fides*" (the myth-forming consciousness) for the intellectual range of the Christian symbolism. But, of course, this principle is valid for humanity's entire mythical treasure: it is a treasure house of insights into the unconscious of spiritual connections which in this day and age we cannot reach in any other way.<sup>33</sup>

It is no accident that this was written at the time of the last revision of the section on Vico and the breakthrough of "Plato's Egyptian Myth." As we know from his correspondence, especially with Schütz and with Engel-Janosi, Voegelin spent the second half of 1946 revising the Vico section and formulating the new theory of Plato's myths that would occupy him for the better part of 1947. In his letters to Schütz, Voegelin stresses that the new Plato chapter had rendered his previous sections on Plato inadequate, and he speaks of the fact that this theory of myth had troubled him for fifteen years.<sup>34</sup> Perhaps it should be noted that Voegelin does not say that it had rendered the entire "History" inadequate. But what had happened since the confrontation with the philosophy of Schelling was now becoming clear: both Plato and Schelling and, to a degree, Vico make the descent into the depth of the soul and return with a "philosophy of the unconscious" that is of "systematic importance in the course of reaction against the preceding Age of Enlightenment," as Voegelin succinctly puts the matter in the "Note" that concludes "Plato's Egyptian Myth."<sup>35</sup>

Two things are worth noting about this fundamental if gradual shift in Voegelin's work at the time. The first one is that the emphasis shifted from the political idea to "theory," as it was called in the original introduction. The second one is that "theory" no longer stood in opposition to the political idea, destined ultimately to dissolve the idea. Rather, theory, under the guidance of Plato,

33. Voegelin to Emil Kauder, January 30, 1947, box 20, file 32.

34. Voegelin to Schütz, January 1947 and April 20, 1947, box 34, file 11. Voegelin's "Plato's Egyptian Myth," *Journal of Politics* 9 (1947): 307-24, is an excerpt from the chapter "Timaeus and Critias" in *Order and History*, vol. III, *Plato and Aristotle* (Baton Rouge, 1957). It is virtually identical with the respective parts of that chapter, except for the introductory and concluding remarks.

35. "Plato's Egyptian Myth," 323-24.

Vico, and Schelling, became virtually identified with the mystical descent into the soul and the unconscious layers of it. The philosophy of history that emerged from this new understanding of "theory" accepts the disintegration of civilization as the price to be paid for the "advancement from the myth of the people to the new level of spiritual consciousness," and "the break of the mystic with the traditional forms of expression is an event which recurs in every civilization in its late phase of disintegration."<sup>36</sup> In other words, it is not so much the case that political ideas are "nonsense" because they do not refer to reality directly; rather, they are now understood Platonically as the "myth of the people" beyond which there is the philosopher's myth. Vico had seen this problem perhaps most clearly when, in Voegelin's words, he demanded,

[W]e have . . . to correct our false picture of rational man by having recourse to history as the field of symbolic expressions in which the unreflected nature of the human mind is accessible to us in its immediacy. The speculation of the philosopher must not ~~use~~ the instrument of reflective meditation; it must start from the unreflected symbols given in history, and it must rise to the speculative penetration of their meaning. (BIIA, 96; 1640)

Vico's and Schelling's searches for a philosophy of the unconscious, their rejection of Descartes's *cogito*—that is, "reflective 'thinking about'" rather than "unreflective, creative evocation of symbols which express a deeper stratum of human substance" (BIIA, 110; 1655)—became Voegelin's own search during those years, and he discovered these strata in Plato's dialogues and later, as late as 1949–1950, in the oracular style of the Heraclitean fragments, analyzed in *The World of the Polis*. No history of political ideas would be able to account for the unconscious strata of human substance, let alone account for the mysterious appearance of the "spiritual realists" in search of order at the time of civilizational breakdowns.

A warning is in order here, however. As much as the emphasis on Vico's and Schelling's philosophy of the unconscious might suggest a romantic element in Voegelin's thought, this is not the case. Writing almost ten years after these studies, at the time of the publication of volume I of *Order and History*, Voegelin was able to summarize the ultimately humanistic concern of his work in a letter to his friend Robert Heilman. The following is perhaps the

36. Ibid., 324.

most touching and sincere account of the purpose of his work and deserves to be quoted in full:

The occupation with works of art, poetry, philosophy, mythical imagination and so forth, makes sense only, if it is conducted as an inquiry into the nature of man. The sentence, while it excludes historicism, does not exclude history, for it is peculiar to the nature of man that it unfolds its potentialities historically. Not that historically anything "new" comes up—human nature is always wholly present—but there are modes of clarity and degrees of comprehensiveness in man's understanding of himself and his position in the world. Obviously Plato and Shakespeare are clearer and more comprehensive in the understanding of man than is Mr. Jones of Cow College. Hence, the study of the classics is the principal instrument of self-education; and if one studies them with loving care, as you most truly observe, one all of a sudden discovers that one's understanding of a great work increases (and also one's ability to communicate such understanding), for the good reason that the student has increased through the process of study—and that after all is the purpose of the enterprise. (At least it is my purpose in spending the time of my life in the study of the prophets, philosophers, and saints.)

What I have just adumbrated (most inadequately, to be sure) is the basis of historical interpretation since Herder and Baader and Schelling. History is the unfolding of the human Psyche; historiography is the reconstruction of the unfolding through the psyche of the historian. The basis of historical interpretation is the identity of substance (the psyche) in the object and the subject of interpretation; and its purpose is participation in the great dialogue that goes through the centuries among men about their nature and destiny. And participation is impossible without growth in stature (within the personal limitations) toward the rank of the best; and that growth is impossible unless one recognizes authority and surrenders to it.<sup>37</sup>

That these insights and the new patterns of the order of history they engendered were the result not of a sudden "vision" but of a gradual and often painful process is attested to by Voegelin himself, both in *Autobiographical Reflections* and in such utterances as one to Engel-Janosi in a letter of December 1948, where Voegelin talks about "black reflections" into which he had been thrown by a critical question Engel-Janosi had concerning the sections on Locke and Marx that Voegelin had sent him: "Do we actually understand history or do we not? Or can we perhaps understand it if we have

37. Voegelin to Robert Heilman, August 22, 1956, box 17, file 9.

■ universalist interpretation of history? Is, in the final analysis, the attempt I am undertaking, the attempt to find some order in the history of the political spirit, nonsense?"<sup>38</sup> These very serious doubts would not come to rest until the systematic work on the Walgreen Lectures, aptly named *The New Science of Politics*.

## VI

There is a degree of thematic unity and concrete concern evident in Voegelin's substantive presentation of the history of ideas that may be illustrated by way of conclusion. Of major interest is the question of Western civilization's community substance and anthropology, its formation, development, vicissitudes both internal and external, decline, and crisis down to the early 1950s when he wrote the last pages of the "History." Voegelin's account of disintegration during the transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance and Reformation and its implications for the modern period into the present will be our focus. We will, also, briefly revisit the question of the relationship of the "History" to his later writings.

1. The civilizational substance itself is expressed in the anthropology of the apocalyptic experience of the spirit of Christ ■ the core of the *corpus mysticum* articulated existentially in the community of faithful persons with Christ ■ head. In Voegelin's words,

[T]he visions of the Resurrected following the death of the Savior . . . ■ the fundamental evocative acts of the Christian community. . . . The Christian community has been, for the better part of two thousand years, the most important political force of the Western world, and the evocative acts that created it are the basis of all later political evocations that occurred in Western history—as far ■ it is Christian. To omit the visions of the disciples would be equivalent to an omission of the Declaration of Independence from a history of American political ideas. (pp. 164–65 herein)

The actual constitution of the community comes through the descent of the Holy Spirit on those assembled on Pentecost day (Acts 2), an event interpreted by Peter. While Jesus the man is

38. "I would characterize the five years between 1945 and 1950 as ■ period of indecision, if not paralysis, in handling the problems that I saw but could not intellectually penetrate to my satisfaction" (*Autobiographical Reflections*, 64); "Verstehen wir nun eigentlich Geschichte; oder verstehen wir sie nicht? . . . Ist vielleicht doch ■ Ende der Versuch, den ich unternahme, einige Ordnung in der Geschichte des politischen Geistes ■ finden, ein Unsinn?" (Voegelin to Engel-Janosi, December 7, 1948, box 11, file 8).

dead, Christ lives, and through his Spirit the community continues to exist just as it did when he was present in the flesh. The eschatological notion of community becomes secondary through the visions of the Resurrected of Paul and his circle in favor of an apocalyptic idea. That is to say, the transformation of the world order in the near future is revised in favor of the belief that the Messiah already has appeared and "that his realm is actually established as the community between him, the Resurrected, and his believers" (p. 166). The new community idea is given in the Book of Hebrews.<sup>39</sup>

The richness of the text cannot be recapitulated here, but at the center is *Faith*. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). Voegelin writes:

Faith is not a subjective attitude of the individual, a belief, but the community substance itself, created by the appearance of Jesus, "the author and finisher of our faith" (12:2). The awakening of the Faith and the consequent partaking of the Holy Ghost is, therefore, not an intellectual process but a transformation of the whole personality, the process by which man is integrated into the community substance. The transformation is described as an "enlightenment," as ■ "tasting of the heavenly gift," and, very characteristic, as ■ contact with "the powers of the world to come (*dynamis*)."

"The community is imagined as ■ field in which 'power' circulates; faith is the process through which ■ man becomes a unit in this field, permeable for the circulating power substance (Heb. 6:4-5)" (p. 167). A new epoch is marked, for the renovation of personality through faith in Christ affects not only individuals but history itself. The ■■■ of Christ will be the time of ultimate fulfillment of the plan of God. "The existence of mankind in time has from now on the meaning that we properly call *history* because God is the divine partner of the process that unfolds according to his providence." The era is determined by the appearance of the kingdom of God as the realm that emerges in the Middle Ages in

39. *Vision* ■ experience-symbol is of cardinal importance in Voegelin's later writings. Analysis of the ■■■■■ under consideration here is directly resumed in "Wisdom and the Magic of the Extreme" (1977), reprinted in *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin*, vol. 12, *Published Essays, 1966-1985*, ed. Ellis Sandoz (Baton Rouge, 1990), beginning with the paragraph that ends: "The apostolic visionaries were better philosophers than ■■■■ of the doctrinaire theologians of our own time" (368). See also "The Pauline Vision of the Resurrected," in Voegelin, *Order and History*, vol. IV, *The Ecumenic Age* (Baton Rouge, 1974), 239-71.

the *sacrum imperium* and that persists in our notion of "Western Christian civilization. The transition from the spiritual meaning of the *metathesis* [change, renovation] to the fuller conception of the *translatio imperii* was aided materially by a passage in Matt. 21:43 in which Jesus announces "That the Kingdom of God shall be taken from you (Israel), and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (169).

The community is a unity in the Spirit so that, whatever the social stratification, every single person enjoys grace "according to the measure of the gift (*charisma*) of Christ" (Eph. 4:4-7). Every one of the diverse members of the community possesses dignity, and as individuals they so complement one another as to form all together through baptism the body of Christ (*corpus mysticum*). The ethics of the community are determined by the Ten Commandments and the new law, which is the law of love (Rom. 13:9-10): "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (170-71). This evocation of community underlay the institutional arrangements of church and empire along lines developed by the Gelasian two-swords formula during the medieval period.

2. Civilizational articulation reached optimal level in the thirteenth century, especially in the climax marked by the person and work of Thomas Aquinas. It soon thereafter began to break apart into its several components and to decline in terms both of its living presence in the hearts of men and of its institutional cohesiveness. Its very strengths were the source of certain weaknesses.

3. Even before then, however, the lines of fracture from atrophy and centrifuge began to appear. The elevation of the individual human person as Christ-bearing and created in the image and likeness of God as ground and fulfillment—uniquely able to *experience* faith, hope, and love and to enjoy the grace of God—threatened the institutionalized community from its inception. The perspectives of Voegelin's account can be gauged from his exploration of these tensions.

Tendencies were present from the beginning of Christianity for the kinds of radical individualism and egalitarianism that became apparent in the Anonymous of York—the contemporary of Anselm of Canterbury (d. 1109) who is now identified by scholars as the Anonymous of Rouen rather than of York—with his assertion of the priesthood of every Christian (B3, 95; 320). This prompts Voegelin

to write of "the Protestant scripturalism of the Anonymous" as its most revolutionary element, rejecting papal supremacy and asserting on every page of the *Tracts* "the free and independent interpretation of the Scriptures without regard for the traditions and institutions of the Roman Church. The general priesthood of the Christian is not a mere theoretical proposition, but is living reality in the attitude of the Anonymous" [B3, 95; 320]. These are sentiments lethal to the *sacrum imperium* itself. "The *York Tracts* revealed what had happened and what was going to happen. If the tenets of the Anonymous concerning general priesthood and the usurpation of Rome were not more than a partisan argument . . . they could be brushed aside as inconsequential; but they were more, for they implied a fact: the fact of the free personality of the author who could live in the age of Christ under the guidance of the sacred writings without assistance from the Church of Rome" (B4, 96; 321). These sentiments grew in England and are traceable in various ways in *Piers Plowman* (ca. 1370), in the work of John Wycliffe (d. 1384) and his followers, in the constitutional developments of Sir John Fortescue (d. 1476?), and into the Puritan movement of the seventeenth century.

The "new realism" of the Anonymous also echoes in Thomas Aquinas, where it is almost as revolutionary (*Summa theologiae* Ia-IIae, question 106, article 1). Voegelin writes:

The *lex nova* is written by the Grace of the Spirit into the hearts of the faithful; only secondarily is it a written law. With a radical sweep, not eliminating but at least not mentioning the Church, the essence of Christianity is put directly in the faith, in *pistis*, in the Pauline sense. . . . The principle of justification by faith is made the essence of the *lex nova*. Within the framework of orthodox Catholic theology this is perhaps the strongest possible expression of the principle of free Christian spirituality. (B4, 247-48; 491-92)

Voegelin is at pains to stress that Thomas was not endorsing "the principle of Lutheran Christianity," a phrase he wrote, then lined through in the manuscript, then went on to explain in a long footnote. Rather Thomas was "stressing to the utmost the spiritual element of faith at the expense of ecclesiastical mediation." But the principle itself indubitably became the mark of Lutheran Protestantism as *sola fide*.

4. This, however, is no embrace of the Reformation itself, which Voegelin characterizes harshly as destructive of *amicitia* and the

core principle expressed by Thomas as *fides caritate formata*. The Reformation Voegelin pronounces a general failure, engendering "civilizational catastrophe" (B8, chap. 4, 82; 1176). With regard to the institutional aspects, as we previously noted, he says:

Since the time of Dante [d. 1321] the spiritual realist is faced with the problem that the surrounding political reality of the Western world no longer can adequately absorb the spirit into its public institutions. . . . The religious reformers, represented by Luther and Calvin, tried to re-create spiritually determined political institutions out of the fading Church-substance. The attempt, resulting in the split of the Church, failed grossly; the spiritual movements were absorbed into the particular Western political spheres. The secular spiritual realists, Machiavelli, Bodin, Hobbes, Spinoza, tried, each one according to the powers of his personality, to find the place of spirit in a world of particular political units. . . . All four of them were isolated as political thinkers, covered with vituperation for their atheism, or their immorality, or their impartiality. . . . To the spiritual realists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries corresponds the completely isolated free spirit of Friedrich Nietzsche, whose analysis of European nihilism is the last judgment of the postmedieval Western world as [Dante's] *Divine Comedy* was its first. (B5, 293; 537)

5. But a paradox elaborately plays out historically in the relationships between the individual personality and the forms of political and church authority. While Voegelin powerfully delineates the struggle for civilizational authority and shows the indispensability of adequate institutional order, he even more emphatically stresses the inviolability of the individual human person under God. The growth of civilizational order can arise only from the experience of truth in charismatic personalities. The interplay is peculiarly the mark of Christianity and of Western civilization. In Voegelin's succinct statement:

[T]he tension between the institutions of the polis and the sentiments of the apolitical groups . . . recurs in a Christian civilization in a more radical form [than in Hellas] because the Christian idea of the person in its immediacy to God [proved to be a] permanent irritant against the institutions. The idea of the Christian person [has] the *double function* of an agent of revolt against the institutionalization of the relations between the soul and God, and of an agent of regeneration of the institutions. (B8, chap. 3, 3; 977, italics added)



Reliance on the spiritually ascertained metaphysical equality of persons and sanctity of individual judgment led through the disruption of the institutional order to various forms of "anti-spiritual spiritualism" (B8, chap. 3, 83; 1057). The tendency resulted by the eighteenth century in the political egalitarianism of the Enlightenment; by the nineteenth century in liberal individualism and in the nihilism of the death of God; and by the twentieth century in perfection of rebellion as seen in the emergent ideological intellectual as autonomous Man and in the dominance of political mass movements of the kind that had first appeared with the "People of God" in the early Reformation years.

The rich details of the account cannot be entered into here, but the contrast between good and bad mysticism demands brief attention. The activist mysticism of the Marxian type is prefigured in the seventeenth-century activist nihilist who, through a combination of "mysticism and animal aggressiveness," rejects existence in the world and society ("stupor") and feels impelled to transform them ("outburst"). Such "anti-spiritual spiritualism" is "a pneumato-pathological perversion [to be distinguished from] the Christian spiritualism which preserves the distance between creaturely finiteness and the absolute Beyond of divine reality. [In the former] the withdrawal from the world and the ascent to the immovability on the summit do not produce a union with a divine substance; they produce, on the contrary, the closing up of man in his finiteness. They do not produce an expansion into the divine ground, but the confinement in the ego" (B8, chap. 3, 64, 83–84; 1038, 1057–58). This constitutes the *egophany* and *egophanic revolt* familiar from Voegelin's later writing.<sup>40</sup>

6. The "good" mysticism is preeminently exemplified in the thought of Thomas Aquinas, Johannes Eckhart, Nicholas of Cusa (d. 1464), and Jean Bodin (d. 1596), especially his *Colloquium heptaplomeres*. Voegelin's kinship with and attraction to these great masters is evident from his treatment of them.

Of decisive importance and demanding notice here is Thomas Aquinas's philosophical anthropology (as given in *Summa contra gentiles*, chap. 116), for by Voegelin's account this differentiates the Western Christian theory of human nature and spiritual culture

40. For *egophany* and *egophanic revolt* see Voegelin, *The Ecumenic Age*, 260–71.

from the Hellenic theory of classical philosophy. Its core is the understanding of true faith as *amicitia*. The term symbolizes the friendship between God and man. The intellectual component of loving, voluntary adherence to God through apprehension of the beatific vision ■■ the *summum bonum*, as the ultimate goal of life, is essential to faith. But this must be completed through a voluntary act of a will so formed by love that the man rests in the Good he apprehends intellectually. "The relationship of *amicitia* is mutual, and it cannot be forced through ■ unilateral act of man . . . but presupposes the love of God toward man, an act of Grace through which the nature of man is heightened by a supernatural *forma*. The loving orientation of man toward God is possible only when the faith of man is formed through the prior love of God toward man," Thomas argues. This, then, is experiential *faith*, that is, "the penetration of the person, through infusion of Grace, with the love of God as the spiritually orienting center of its existence. Faith formed by love, thus, is the reality of loving orientation of existence toward God" (B8, 48-49; 1142-43). Thomas's insight into spiritual reality as it presents the perfection of the human person through the mutuality of love of God is something Voegelin finds to be unique to Christianity, for there is nothing in Hellenic civilization comparable to 1 John 4: "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that Loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. . . . We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:7-8, 19). Voegelin goes so far as to find in Thomas's theory of *fides caritate formata* and its amplification into a "grandiose, systematic philosophy of man and society" not merely the climax of the interpenetration of Christianity and ■ historical civilization but perhaps the very *raison d'être* of the West itself historically. Clearly, it establishes the experiential standard that is the measure for subsequent theories of man and reality.

When that standard is applied, the counterpart of the *amicitia* is found in the decline that ends with Comte and Marx in the nineteenth century. By then the *amicitia* has substantially disintegrated as the experiential ground of Western community and man's self-understanding. In its place one finds an abomination: "the revolt against God ■■ the basis for the world-immanent order of society. [T]he dogma of human self-salvation, in hermetical closure against transcendental reality marks an end of Western civilizational history beyond which, at the moment, nothing is visible but

the bleakness of imprisonment in human nature without Grace" (B8, 50; 1144).<sup>41</sup>

7. Averroism, Joachimism, the intramundane emphasis of Franciscan spirituality, and the hierarchicalism of pseudo-Dionysius are other major factors eroding Christian community substance and disorienting it from spiritual communion in Christ and toward collectivism, immanentism, and authoritarianism. The anti-personalistic collectivism of the Averroist (from Averroës, or Ibn Rushd, d. 1198) principle of *intellectus unus*—with its consequent monopsychism and monosomatism—holds that only one Intellect (*uno in numero*) exists for the whole human race and is present as a spark in human beings to the exclusion of personal immortality, thereby undermining the notion of Christian personality. "This metaphysical assumption of the collective existence of mankind, biologically as well as intellectually, marks the first appearance of the intramundane Western divinities for which Hegel has found the classic formula of the Objective Mind." A hierarchy of human types leads up to an intellectual elite. The hierarchy is determined by degrees of participation in the objective Intellect, so that the nonphilosophical or ordinary man is treated as an inferior type and even compared "to animals, an attitude that seems to crop up as soon as the Christian insight into the equal spiritual dignity of all men is abandoned" (B4, chap. 11, 199–200; 443–44). When combined with the principle of hierarchy, such collectivism decisively erodes Christian anthropology as it is rooted in the experience of the spiritual equality of all human beings with each man bearing *imago Dei*.

The freedom and independence of the intellect basic to Thomas (d. 1274) as a great spiritualist were followed within a generation by the authoritarianism of Boniface VIII in *Unam sanctam* (1302) and its intellectual groundwork by papal counselor Egidius Romanus, whose thought supplied the decisive formulas of the bull. A new sentiment of power is expressed in the scheme of hierarchy culminating in the absolute authority of the papacy over the church and over all temporal power as well. Voegelin's contempt for these developments is patent. He characterizes them as "absolutist,"

41. The foregoing analysis of *amicitia* must be understood as assumed as the basis of the presentation given in Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction* (Chicago, 1952), 76–80.

"fascist," and "totalitarian" (B5, 262, 267-68; 508, 511-12). He also decries them as a betrayal of the medieval spiritualism exemplified in Thomas Aquinas and as pivotal developments inaugurating modernity's unsavory march toward the twentieth-century socialist eschatologies of Lenin and Hitler. Voegelin writes that, according to the bull, "The princely power is completely subordinate to the papal. . . . Within the ecclesiastical hierarchy itself, the power is concentrated at the apex of the structure in the pope. The Church practically disappears behind the Pontiff. . . . We are very close to the *L'état c'est moi!* The Church substance has been transformed into a hierarchical governmental organization with an absolute head, representing the whole" (B5, 305; 514).

The contrast with the community substance of Christianity is drawn bluntly:

[T]he constitutional theory of the *corpus mysticum* is replaced by a new doctrine of power. In the theory of the *sacrum imperium* the charismata are given by God directly; the functions within the *corpus mysticum* are exercised freely; the members are held together by mutual love in the Pauline sense (1 Cor. 13). The hierarchical theory of power is a new element, incompatible with the Pauline doctrine as well as with the Gelasian. It rationalizes the older Christian evocation in the direction of a hierarchical system with an absolute power at the top of the pyramid. (B5, 298; 507)

"As soon as the idea of the spiritual unity of mankind is translated from the free coexistence of Christians as members of the body of Christ into terms of a spiritual unity controlled by the holder of supreme power, the outlines of a form of government appear that today we are accustomed to call totalitarian. . . . [T]he creation of man in the image of God becomes dangerously close to being a privilege of those who hold power" (B5, 302-4; 511-13). In fact the designation *homo spiritualis* now is reserved to "the hierarchy of the Church. The bull, indeed, transfers the spiritual ranks, as we should find them in a Gnostic sect, to the whole body of Christianity. . . . Incredible as it may seem, Boniface VIII has made the attempt of transforming the spiritual and temporal orders of medieval Christianity into a Gnostic empire." In the words of a papal supporter, Arnold of Villanova, "Who of the faithful would not know . . . that the Roman Pontiff is Christ on earth (*Christus in terris*)?" The New Testament view thereby is profoundly contradicted. For the Apostle Paul the spiritual man (*pneumatikos*) of

1 Corinthians 2 on principle is *every Christian*, "whether cleric or layman, while the bull arrogates the spirituality of man to the clerical order, and within this order in a highest degree to the Supreme Pontiff" (B8, 109-11; 1083-85).

8. Decisive later developments ~~arose~~ in the wake of the celebrated work of William of Ockham (d. 1349) partitioning truth and consciousness between nominalist philosophy that can only hypothetically interpret the natural order and revealed faith that is a miracle of God altogether inaccessible and impervious to reason. The fideism of the religious position protects the truth of Christian revelation from erosion by reason and by Averroist naturalism. But this is achieved at the price of divorcing faith from reason. Christian truth is pushed into the posture of irrationality. It lives only by a dogmatic assertion, and that isolates faith from a civilizational process unable to benefit from vivification through the critical intellect. The catastrophic results can variously be seen. They are evident in Martin Luther's reliance on faith alone along with his radical separation of the soul from nature. They appear well in the increasingly authoritarian rigidity of the Roman Catholic Church that ultimately ends in proclamation of papal infallibility (1870) the dogmatic capstone and in the complementary doctrine of *sacrificium intellectus* already asserted by Egidius. This requires subordination of intellectual activity to the dogmas of faith, destroying thereby integrity of mind (B8, 389; 598).

Ockham's doctrine that substance is inaccessible to reason deprived rationality of the noetic dimension (*intellectus* in Thomas, as contrasted with *ratio*) and pointed the way toward Kant's critique of pure reason and its demonstration of the unknowability of the thing-in-itself, apart from commonsense understanding and practical rationality. The assurance from multiple sources of the irrationality of the life of the spirit, then, indelibly imprinted itself on modern positivist philosophy and political science through the fact-value dichotomy, value-free science, scientism, and the syndrome Voegelin analyzes in terms of *phenomenalism*, as previously mentioned (cf. B13, 126-51; 2011-39). With noetic rationality both theoretically and dogmatically (that is, condemned as the heresy of "modernism") eclipsed and barred from freely exploring the uniquely human spheres of mind and spirit that extend beyond the merely physical, biological, and mortal, the way is paved for the so-called age of reason and ideological politics. Both faith

and the critical intellect stand helplessly aside—largely socially ineffectual—because they are either reactionary or impotent, unless accidents of power and enclaves of civilizational substance allow their exertion of influence against the prevailing climates of opinion. While it is a long reach from Egidius and Ockham to the present and much else occurs in the interim that Voegelin attends to in his account, the early Renaissance events under discussion can be seen to have greatly influenced the growth of radical modernity. By the nineteenth century, the community substance of the West had reached the stage of “civilizational disintegration” (B13, 126; 2012).

9. The process of the formation and collapse of community substance in Western society through despiritualization, loss of cohesion, and power factors is given general characterization in the first chapter on the Reformation. There Voegelin remarks,

[T]he institutional realization of Christian *homonoia* was always exposed to the danger of cracking historically under the pressure of a changing and differentiating civilization. . . . The question, of course, is unsolvable; the unity of the Church must rest in the willingness to compromise and cooperate in the spirit of Christ; once the spiritual freedom of cooperation has atrophied to the point that unity must rest on the decision of one of several socially entrenched, rival authorities, the danger of schism is near. . . . The spirit is absolute; but the symbolization of its experience and its institutionalization in the life of human community is historical. In the course of history, symbolizations that expressed the essence of Christianity adequately at one time may become inadequate in a new age; the essence of Christianity is a matter of permanent readjustment to its historical expression. . . . The flash of eternity that is the Church is a flash into history; the doctrinal expressions of the flash—which at the beginnings of the Church may have seemed as eternal as the flash itself—reveal their relativity in the light of history that flows on through the ages. (B8, chap. 4, 9–10; 1103–4)

## VII

Abandonment of the “History” was motivated, according to its author, at least primarily (if not exclusively) by recognition at length of a theoretical flaw in its basic conception. This was Voegelin’s insight that the history of ideas is itself an ideological deformation, and that ideas are a secondary or tertiary manifestation of consciousness. There are no ideas, Voegelin explained in 1973, unless there are first “original experiences-symbolizations” from which “ideas” derive. Unfortunately, ideas tend to become misleading

abstractions subject to reification with a life of their own when considered apart from the engendering experiential context. Dogmatic clashes of ideas replace philosophizing as the "dominant form of self-understanding" in Western thought to become characteristic of "hundreds of years of dogmatomachy."<sup>42</sup> In light of this discovery, as previously noted, Voegelin concluded: "I had to give up 'ideas' as objects of a history and establish the experience of reality—personal, social, historical, cosmic—as the reality to be explored historically. These experiences, however, one could explore only by exploring their articulation through symbols. . . . Hence, I gave up the project of a *History of Political Ideas* and started my own work on *Order and History*."<sup>43</sup> We have considered evidence that suggests there was more to it than that, and some of the complexities already have been identified.

A further aspect to be considered seems to lie in the conviction slowly arrived at that the aloof contemplative attitude of the philosopher and spiritual realist (with whom Voegelin steadily identified himself) cannot stand so far apart from the common lot of mankind as to achieve objective knowledge of truth in a radically different perspective from that accorded ordinary mortals. This is to abandon neither science nor its claim to critical knowledge through *noesis*. But it is to contract the distance that separates philosophers, seers, prophets, and poets from ordinary humans and common experience. The only reality we have is reality experienced in participation, Voegelin often insisted. There is no Archimedean point outside reality from which the dispassionate contemplator can pursue his investigations.<sup>44</sup> The leap in being is not a leap out of reality—a tempting perversity. That is, even grandiose prophets and philosophers are constrained by the human condition in which they are participant. Thus, once it is differentiated there is *only* the perspective of participatory reality, the In-Between (*metaxy*) with indices of immanence and transcendence, as the ineluctable site of human striving and the arena of history and meditation. The tension toward the divine Ground and its differentiation over time

42. Eric Voegelin, *Anamnesis: Zur Theorie der Geschichte und Politik* (Munich, 1966), 327–28; *Anamnesis*, ed. and trans. Gerhart Niemeyer (1978; rpt. Columbia, Mo., 1990), 187; cf. Sandoz, *Voegelinian Revolution*, 162–65.

43. Voegelin, *Autobiographical Reflections*, 79–80.

44. Voegelin, *New Science of Politics*, 79; Voegelin, *Anamnesis*, 293; *Anamnesis*, ed. Niemeyer, 153: "There is no Archimedean point from which participation itself could be seen as an object."

in biography and history can be explored adequately only in partnership with God, so that reason no less than faith lives as and by theophany. The hard distinctions fallaciously drawn between faith and reason must give way before the evidence.<sup>45</sup> Commonsense understanding—from Plato to Thomas Reid the home of sound opinion—is seen to be both the matrix and the residuum of *pistis* and *noesis*; it compactly intimates the way to representative truth for every man open to truth's appeal.<sup>46</sup>

Science for its part is rescued from the positivists' scientism and reductionism, and philosophy and faith are reinterpreted experientially as the meditative science fashioned by Plato and Aristotle in antiquity and augmented historically through the ages by such pneumatic contemplatives as prophets, apostles, and mystics. We cannot go behind the experiences of revelation and pretend they never happened, since truth as it is accessible to human beings lies at the level of the experiences-symbols, and revelatory experiences, too, must be considered relevant. Thus Voegelin came to argue that it is ever representative truth and never absolute Truth that lies within human reach, so that philosophy itself is ever the love of wisdom and never absolute knowledge. Claims to the contrary are perversities and deformations. In light of that judgment, most of the history of philosophy could be seen as "derailed" through doctrine, dogma, bad faith, or plain crookedness. As Voegelin wrote in 1965: "[H]istory is the history of participation, and the symbols referring to the poles of participation are the indices of experience. When the indices of experiences are made into an autonomous object of history, the result is the *parekbasis* of doxography, or the 'history of ideas.' "<sup>47</sup>

If we summarize pertinent elements of Voegelin's later writings, the "History" may be seen more clearly not only as the great exploration of intellectual history that it is but also as the preparatory study whereby its author gradually completed a groping exodus

45. Cf. Eric Voegelin, "The Beginning and the Beyond: A Meditation on Truth," in *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin*, vol. 28, *What Is History? And Other Late Unpublished Writings*, ed. Thomas A. Hollweck and Paul Caringella (Baton Rouge, 1990), esp. 210–30.

46. Cf. Voegelin, *Anamnesis*; also *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin*, vol. 1, *On the Form of the American Mind*, trans. Ruth Hein, ed. Jürgen Gebhardt and Barry Cooper (Baton Rouge, 1995), 29–34 and passim.

47. *Anamnesis*, ed. Niemeyer, 182. "[T]he history of philosophy is in the largest part the history of its derailment" (Voegelin, *Plato and Aristotle*, 277).



from his youthful neo-Kantianism. He thus equipped himself by finding a path toward the mature science of politics, history, and consciousness that crowns his thought and forms a philosophically revitalized *fides quaerens intellectum*.

Underlying the "ideas" that particularized the evocative sentiments constituting the "imaginary" cosmions of social order he ultimately found something more fundamental. This Voegelin at length recognized as bedrock reality, as something present in the consciousness of representative personalities at specific times and places in experiences symbolized. This seems to have been the "breakthrough" he sometimes spoke of with respect to his own work, or the "vision" that emerged not so much suddenly as over a long period of meditative attention. At any rate, in the later writings Voegelin argues that the several forms of consciousness reality—identified as myth, history, philosophy, revelation—arise in historically and geographically distant points and in a variety of ethnic and cultural contexts. Yet he found them comparable and often even equivalent as articulating representative truth of the common reality and of the Truth beyond representation.<sup>48</sup>

Thus, the "magic" of the human imager of ideas dispersed under investigation in several directions. On one hand, it appears in the concrete responses of the human personalities who experience divine encounters and imaginatively elaborate them into the great symbolic forms of order in history observable in several modes and traditions of meditation. On another hand, it appears in the derivative cosmions of social and personal order forming as social convention and dogma, each claiming existential truth for itself. The latter, while dependent for their vitality upon the former, manifest an independence and autonomy that on first consideration make the evocative sentiments seem merely exercises in volition and magical incantation. The appearance is reinforced by their self-interpretation as intellectual constructs, whether in the name of "philosophical systems" laying claim to comprehensive truth, or in the name of social systems asserting universal hegemony over history and mankind, or in the name of religious dogmas claiming dominion over time and eternity themselves. Such cosmions with their formidable armament of doctrinal and legal structures

48. Eric Voegelin, "Equivalences of Experience and Symbolization in History" (1970), in *Published Essays, 1966-1985*, ed. Sandoz, 133.

coercively applied at best dogmatize and at worst mendaciously pervert the show of representative truth upon which all of them rely for vitality and plausibility and upon which some of them may first have arisen as means of conservation and protection of truth from external threat and internal disintegration. And on yet another hand, the magic appears in the extensive catalog of human manipulators in purposeful rebellion through intoxication with *libido dominandi* against the divine Ground who aspire to the autonomy of the superman in anti-philosophy, apolitical politics, and Gnostic ersatz religion.<sup>49</sup>

It appears that by some such reflective process, then, Voegelin moved beyond the language of the "History" as a study of evocative sentiments and political ideas strung through time as ascertained by dispassionate contemplative science. In so doing his ever unfinished search for order arrived at a complex theory of order and disorders of history that preserved the Whole conceived as self-interpretative—through the human-divine capacity of man as uniquely reflective reality. At the center stands the human personality and the rational and imaginative consciousness whereby some assuaging sense is made of mankind's journey through time in partnership with God. The result is the redefinition of ontology, anthropology, epistemology, and the *conditio humana* itself, one that forms through the open quest of knowing questions and questioning knowledge arising from the collaborative wonder and love of Being in the human-divine encounter marking historical existence.<sup>50</sup>

Turning, as he said, to *his own work* served a primarily therapeutic purpose in Voegelin's view. For on the basis of his earlier studies (the five books in German and many articles) and, especially, by researching and writing the "History," perhaps he felt obliged to try his hand at providing a more adequate response to the crisis of consciousness-reality, now from the hard-won perspective of mystic-philosopher. As intimated, that turn took him toward the heart of the experiences informing the symbols of noetic

49. Cf. Eric Voegelin, "On Hegel: A Study in Sorcery" and "Wisdom and the Magic of the Extreme," in *ibid.*, 213–55, 315–75; also "Reason: The Classic Experience," in *ibid.*, esp. 277–87.

50. For "knowing questions" and "questioning knowledge," see "Was ist Natur?" and "Was ist politische Realität?" in *Anamnesis*, 150–52, 290, 309; *Anamnesis*, ed. Niemeyer, 86–88, 150, 168.

and pneumatic meditative consciousness, and to their comparative analysis in terms of structure, process, cogency, and equivalences. The reader of the pages of the prodigious work called *History of Political Ideas* senses ■ gloom deepening toward the near despair of "hopeless hope." At the level of surface events, modernity unravels down to the unprecedented destruction of the Second World War, whose underlying biological and economic justification is summarized in the murderous dictum "what can be done should be done"—a line Voegelin wrote six weeks before the first atomic bomb fell on Hiroshima (B13, 151a-b; 2037-39).

After the last monumental effort of recovery by Schelling (d. 1854) came Comte, Marx, and "the tragically absurd . . . spiritual revolt against the spirit" ending in Nietzsche's nihilism (B8, chap. 3, 7; 981). How well Voegelin's mighty effort—admittedly a finger in the dike, as efforts on behalf of truth must ever be—"succeeds" is ■ question to be considered in the long term, but that it finds place in a noble philosophical pedigree is evident.

As becomes clear especially in the later years, the pedigree of Voegelin's great work of recovery must be so extended as to include the prophetic tradition, and this is implicit in the title *mystic-philosopher* he applied to the Hellenic philosophers and accepted for himself. The empirical (especially apperceptive) and scientific aspect controls Voegelin's attitude in this as in his attention to other modes of experience. All of the evidence must be taken seriously and considered impartially if the search toward authoritative truth aspires to adequacy even as representative truth. A hallmark of Voegelin's later work is the closing of the gap between faith and philosophy to form an experientially grounded noetic-pneumatic contemplative science searching the ground of truth of the reality inhabited alike by prophets, apostles, philosophers, sages, and mankind, past and present. There is ■ decidedly prophetic dimension to Voegelin's devotion to truth, one that occasionally results in the kind of blunt, even caustic candor seen from time to time in the "History" and evident elsewhere in Voegelin's writings.

The attitude is well illustrated by his famous inaugural lecture at the University of Munich. There ■ stir was made not only in the lecture hall but in the local press because the new political science professor had shown Karl Marx to have been a conscious and purposeful "swindler" who knew his claims were false. But

Marx persisted in their propagation despite that fact and, using a characteristic trick, refused to answer pertinent questions so as to conceal his dishonesty. The lecture passage leading into this exposition illustrates the point:

We shall now try to present the phenomenon of the prohibition of questions through an analysis of representative opinions. Thus, this effort will present not only the phenomenon, but the exercise of analysis as well. It should show that the spiritual disorder of our time, the civilizational crisis of which everyone so readily speaks, does not by any means have to be borne as an inevitable fate; that, on the contrary, everyone possesses the means of overcoming it in his own life. And our effort should not only indicate the means, but also show how to employ them. No one is obliged to take part in the spiritual crisis of a society; on the contrary, everyone is obliged to avoid this folly and live his life in order. Our presentation of the phenomenon, therefore, will at the same time furnish the remedy for it through therapeutic analysis.<sup>51</sup>

The depth of the crisis is reflected in the sternness of its diagnostician and therapist, who resolutely calls all who will hear to heed truth in its representative utterances. This is a characteristic stance, for both philosopher and prophet are called to represent the *authority of truth* within the limits of their vision, Voegelin believed. There are concrete consequences. To accept the authority of truth entails resistance to untruth and corruption. Such resistance involves not merely intellectual considerations but ethical and political action at the level of pragmatic existence and personal conduct, thereby to live "in order" as far as everyone is able to do so. For those unwilling to hear truth or reluctant to take it to heart, Voegelin on another memorable occasion evoked the persona of watchman and the power of truth by recalling Ezekiel's timeless word:

So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me.

If I say to the wicked, O wicked man, you shall surely die; and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand.

51. Eric Voegelin, *Science, Politics and Gnosticism: Two Essays*, trans. William J. Fitzpatrick, intro. Ellis Sandoz (1968; rpt. Washington, D.C., 1997). 22-23. The lecture was first published in German in 1959 by Kösel-Verlag KG Munich.

But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way; he shall die in his iniquity, but you will have saved your soul. (Ezekiel 33:7-9)<sup>52</sup>

Thus, Voegelin associates himself at every level with the truth of prophets and saints no less than with the truth of philosophers. The matter is not simple theoretically, however, and only a hint can be attempted here. He ultimately finds both modes of understanding experientially complementary, both yielding penultimate truth illuminating through paradox the common reality of human participation. Reality itself, however, continues ever mysterious, its mystery receding beyond all luminosity won by human questioners engaged in the open quest of *fides quaerens intellectum*—whether the search be that of Plato or Bonaventure or that of Leibniz.<sup>53</sup> It seems right, then, to read Voegelin's "History" as well as subsequent writings—with his humility in the quest, resolute vocation as a scholar, and personal courage all kept firmly in mind—"as expressions of the author's evolving experience, even though what he tries to communicate is an insight concerning the revelation of God in history."<sup>54</sup>

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52. This passage from the Book of Ezekiel concluded Voegelin's 1965 lecture at the University of Munich entitled "The German University and the Order of German Society: A Reconsideration of the Nazi Era," reprinted in *Published Essays, 1966-1985*, ed. Sandoz, 35.

53. Cf. *Order and History*, vol. V, *In Search of Order* (Baton Rouge, 1987), esp. 87-103: "It means that the quest for truth is ultimately penultimate. In the quest, reality is experienced as the mysterious movement of an It-reality through thing-reality toward a Beyond of things" (102).

54. Eric Voegelin, *Order and History*, vol. I, *Israel and Revelation* (Baton Rouge, 1956), 496.



## Editor's Introduction

It is not my task to discuss the circumstances under which Voegelin wrote the "History of Political Ideas," except insofar as those circumstances affected the state of the manuscript and the contents of this first volume. A few general remarks will, however, make it easier to situate the work that is presented here.

The uprooted scholar who had fled the Nazis in Vienna needed to reestablish himself in his new American surroundings. He naturally welcomed the opportunity to write a textbook for a respected and visible publisher. He embarked on the task with great vigor, even as he battled with the insecurity of his professional position and the smaller or greater indignities imposed upon a man of considerable accomplishments having to start all over again as a newcomer.<sup>1</sup>

What Voegelin expected of himself as an author could not be contained within the modest format and equally modest demands that could reasonably be made on the readers of a college textbook. In the monumental tradition of German scholarship he intended to produce an original work that would be a standard in the sense of providing a theoretically thorough examination of its field, integrating the most advanced state of valid scholarship pertinent to that field. In addition to what one might call the external tensions surrounding the genesis of the "History," Voegelin frequently spoke

1. See the detailed description of Voegelin's relations with McGraw-Hill and his editor there, Fritz Morstein Marx, in the General Introduction. On his professional insecurities, see in particular the correspondence with Engel-Janosi but also that with Karl Löwith and Morstein Marx. The correspondence is in the Voegelin papers at the Hoover Institution and also available on microfilm. The box and file numbers of the Hoover Archive do not correspond to the microfilm reel numbers and may therefore cause confusion. Date and name of correspondent are adequate means of locating the letters in either original or microfilm.

of an internal conflict or impasse: ■■ he worked through the materials for the "History of Political Ideas" he came to understand that such ■ project was "a senseless undertaking, incompatible with the present state of science."<sup>2</sup> He came to realize that ideas are secondary conceptual developments that cannot properly be thought to have ■ history, much less be said to be the object of history. With the transformation of symbols of experience into concepts, they can be detached from experience and become, as it were, reified referents to ■ reality other than that of experience—that is, distorting pointers to ■ false reality. Consequently, Voegelin abandoned the "History of Ideas" in favor of what was to become *Order and History*, which, in the words of the first line of that book, "emerges from the history of order."<sup>3</sup> If, on the one hand, Voegelin felt that the completed "History" was no longer entirely satisfactory and was moved to recast part of the materials into *Order and History*, he did not repudiate the earlier manuscript, but continued for ■ time to seek a publisher for it. The General Introduction has shown the unbroken process of maturation of Voegelin's method. Voegelin himself emphasized the continuity between his original project and the latest hitherto unpublished version:

The MS has changed since 1944, though the changes *affect primarily its size, not its nature*. The expansion has occurred in the areas which in 1944 were not yet treated at all, or in the form of insignificant summaries, because I did not yet know enough to handle them more thoroughly. The 1000 pages of MS. which are now in your hands, that is two thirds of the whole first volume in its present form, were practically non-existent in 1944 and not even planned to exist. The remainder of that volume, the sections on Plato and Aristotle, have increased only moderately, chiefly through the additions of analyses of the various Platonic myths which in 1944 had to be omitted, because I had not yet developed the methods for analyzing myths of this type.<sup>4</sup>

The state of the manuscript reflects this situation of flux and reworking in the light of an increasingly differentiated method and

2. Eric Voegelin, *Autobiographical Reflections*, ed. Ellis Sandoz (Baton Rouge, 1989), 78. See also the carefully modulated intellectual biography by Gregor Sebba, "Prelude and Variations ■■ the Theme of Eric Voegelin," in *Eric Voegelin's Thought: A Critical Appraisal*, ed. Ellis Sandoz, (Durham, N.C., 1982), 3–65.

3. Eric Voegelin, *Order and History*, vol. I, *Israel and Revelation* (Baton Rouge, 1956), ix.

4. Voegelin to McCurdy, who had succeeded the infinitely patient Charles Anderson as Voegelin's editor ■ Macmillan, July 5, 1954, box 24, file ■ (italics added).



the continuing absorption of the ever broader progress of scholarship in pertinent fields. In the holograph notes we find what in comparison with the mature work are "insignificant summaries" on the ancient Orient and the classical polis. The brief sketches on the Near East were, of course, completely recast in the light of the results of the Chicago Oriental Institute. The outlines and tables of contents show clear marks of an expansion "in the middle," in the sections that deal primarily with Plato and Aristotle. The holograph materials on classical Greece are tellingly divided into two batches: "Greece without Plato" and "Plato." The typescript has disappeared—consumed, ■■ it were, in the radical refashioning that appeared as *Order and History*. It can be fairly said that the section of the "History" dealing with the Orient and archaic and classical Greece has been superseded by *Order and History*. Outside of the new synthesis, but reflecting the state of analytical sophistication achieved at the time, Voegelin himself chose to publish some essays based on these materials, such ■■ "The World of Homer" (1953), "The Philosophy of Existence: Plato's *Gorgias*" (1949), and "Plato's Egyptian Myth" (1947).<sup>5</sup> I believe that any attempt beyond that to reconstruct this section of the "History" from the fragmentary evidence would yield scant results. Voegelin's general introduction to the "History" (Appendix A) gives ■ full account of his theoretical position in 1944.

It is clear that Voegelin used the parts of the "History" relating to the ancient Orient and Greece as ■ quarry for the construction of *Order and History*, and in the process destroyed the earlier version beyond feasible or useful reconstruction. The part relating to the Hellenistic, Roman, and Paleo-Christian period, by contrast, has ■ life of its own. The work as it stands has its own coherence. It is also evidence of the underlying continuity of Voegelin's thought. What in retrospect appeared to Voegelin as a radical reorientation proves on closer examination to be a long and continuous development. Many elements of his mature thought are clearly prefigured even in the earlier stages of the "History," represented by the texts appearing in this volume.

Although in some sense Voegelin followed the conventional pattern of ■ history of ideas laid down by Sabine and others, it is quite

5. "Plato's Egyptian Myth," *Journal of Politics* 9 (1947): 307-24; "The Philosophy of Existence: Plato's *Gorgias*," *Review of Politics* 11 (1949): 477-98; "The World of Homer," *Review of Politics* 15 (1953): 491-523.

clear from the beginning and throughout this volume that he was mainly concerned with "evocations"—sometimes called "magic evocations"—that is, historical articulations of experience constitutive or regulative of political order. In fact, Voegelin had long regarded social bodies as objectifications of the spirit, "spiritual forms constrained by finite properties," and considered the "self-expressive phenomena" as the proper objects of historical study and theoretical reflection at least since 1928.<sup>6</sup> In his *Autobiographical Reflections* he claims that he came only "much later" to suspect that "ideas" in the ideological-distorting sense probably have their origin in the Stoic "common notions."<sup>7</sup> The evolution of Voegelin's understanding of ideas vis-à-vis theoretical contemplation is nicely described in the General Introduction. But the problem is already clearly envisaged in the chapter on Stoicism in the present volume.

The entire chapter on Cicero turns on an already developed theory of the shallowness and ideologically distorting power of reified ideas, separated from their experiential referent, here called "hieroglyphics." Voegelin treats Roman law in the same spirit, as a vast and enormously influential hieroglyphic. His approach to the law here is no different from the one he adopted in the course on the philosophy of law that he delivered at Louisiana State University in the years he was working on the "History."<sup>8</sup>

The narrative presented here is also evidence of Voegelin's steady equanimity in dealing with all texts, sacred or profane, an evidence of phenomena of consciousness and as adequate or distorted

6. Jürgen Gebhardt, "Toward the Process of Universal Mankind: The Formation of Voegelin's Philosophy of History," in *Eric Voegelin's Thought*, ed. Sandoz, 73, 63. That "evocations" rather than theories or ideas are the object of Voegelin's analysis was part of the criticism of the censorious external reader for Macmillan, who felt that Voegelin's approach tended to "minimize the rational or factual content of the subject matter" and open the door to "subjective" judgments that defy historical verification (report attached to letter from Anderson, February 5, 1948). Voegelin's response, in which he barely contained his anger, is a good summary of his position and at the same time a clear sign of the tension he felt in relation to the contemporary academic climate.

7. *Autobiographical Reflections*, 13.

8. *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin*, vol. 27, *The Nature of the Law and Related Legal Writings*, ed. Robert Anthony Pascal, James Lee Babin, and John William Corrington (Baton Rouge, 1991). Whether this approach does justice to Cicero, Roman law, and more generally the Roman understanding of tradition embodied in practices, rather than in explicit "evocations," would be the object of a long discussion. It is unquestionably motivated by opposition to the reductionist attempts to understand the reality of a polity strictly in terms of its system of formal legal norms as advocated, for example, by Hans Kelsen.

symbolizations of experience, neither granting ■ priori authority nor subjecting to special doubt documents of any religious tradition. His free discussion of the Gospels and Saint Paul in this volume no less than in the later works is clear evidence of his detachment. That he came to regard the symbolic universe of medieval Christianity ■ a rare moment of balance between the evocative reality of ■ particular order and the freedom of the person to contemplate such an order in theoretical openness does not result from a religious commitment or predilection, but is the upshot of historical and philosophical inquiry. What is at issue is the historically rare possibility of upholding the imaginative structures of an evocation, that is, of a finite microcosm of meaning, without losing sight of the absolute beyond, that is of the truth of human existence.

Voegelin saw three great symbolic forms emerging from the ancient world: myth, history, and philosophy. It was not until the great advances in Oriental studies allowed him to explore in greater depth the specificity of the Israelite experience against the background of the cosmological empires that revelation would appear as ■ fourth major symbolic form. His rich discussion of Israelite themes in this volume—the covenant, the law, prophecy, the move toward the individual subject in the Suffering Servant, etc.—are dealt with by and large in terms of myth and history, the latter being, of course, itself ■ theme of outstanding importance.

Voegelin returned to several of the figures and themes discussed in this volume and dealt with them in much greater detail: Israel, Polybius, Alexander, the Stoics, Saint Paul, Saint Augustine. But the materials are presented here in a particularly readable sequence and give rise to reflections of historical and theoretical interest that one does not find elsewhere in his work. Also, he dwells at greater length on figures such as Cicero, authors he felt he could not leave out in a history that was meant to "cover the ground," although he did not find them congenial to his philosophical sensibility, or worthy in the long run of sustained criticism in the context of his more mature speculation.

A characteristic pleasure and perhaps also the difficulty of reading Voegelin is largely in following what Gregor Sebba has aptly called his "leapfrogging." The analysis of particular materials gives rise to theoretical reflections, and, conversely, theoretical differentiation leads to ■ renewed approach to historical texts. The pertinence of ■■ set of problems emerges apropos of apparently distant

historical materials. Theoretical threads of meaning are woven to create a very broad canvas. Given the vast scope of the enterprise, the immediate effect is less of an orderly shuttle than of stimulating, illuminating, and perhaps also disconcerting leaps. The leaps in this part of Voegelin's work are not quite the same as those we witness in other parts, and they are well worth making available in print.

In one important sense the book presented here is not what Voegelin would have wanted it to be: it does not reflect "the present state of science." He always used the term *science* for valid scholarly work, without any concessions to English usage, which tends to restrict its meaning to the natural sciences. Voegelin's understanding of social science ultimately derived from Max Weber, though he went beyond Weber in linking cognitive with existential truth.<sup>9</sup> The scientist is animated by intellectual integrity that seeks to encompass all the available empirical evidence, without excluding materials liable to undermine his given intellectual position. In this he is juxtaposed and indeed opposed to the ideological distortions and self-delusions that are—as the honest scientist must recognize—woven into the texture of any society. We know from the correspondence that Voegelin fretted against the ideological climate of academic opinion. But he was just as likely to protest that critics failed or refused to understand his work, not because they were wrongheaded, but because they were behind the times.<sup>10</sup>

Along with a measure of cultural pessimism, Voegelin manifests a progressive optimism with regard to the advancement of "science." This is certainly linked—despite regressive rebellions and "social amnesia"—to his view of human self-understanding as generally unfolding in the course of time in a process of ever greater differentiation and doubtless also to a sense that his own work has epochal significance, coming at a time in which the empirical materials made accessible by "the state of science" allowed for the possibility of a new theoretical breakthrough of consciousness. If the philosophical *epoche* is brought forth as a response to the surrounding ideological crisis, it does not result from abstract speculation. It emerges rather out of the meditative reenactment

9. On Voegelin's debt and on the nature of his departure from Weber see Gebhardt, "Toward the Process of Universal Mankind," 69–73.

10. Voegelin to Fritz Morstein Marx, May 6, 1941.

of the motivating experiences of symbolic evocations of the past, on the basis of the empirical evidence made available and analyzed in the light of science. In that sense, philosophy and history are inseparable.

Half a century of scholarship has produced a flood of new materials. Scripts have been deciphered, inscriptions and texts of all kinds discovered and edited, archaeological evidence brought to light, hitherto unknown or unfamiliar cultures studied. Accepted interpretations of well-known figures, events, and institutions have been revisited. Problems of method have arisen, and discussions ranging from minute technical details to the broadest themes have filled thousands of pages. Bringing this book "up to date" would mean sifting through fifty years of work in classics, Oriental, biblical, and patristic studies; history; philosophy; theology; archaeology; and all the other "fields" within Voegelin's sweeping range. The task would be not only vast but also delicate, not to say presumptuous, for it would require the editor to examine the materials and the controversies as the author would have, if the book were to remain true to itself.

The book as Voegelin wrote it remains a brilliant essay on the period from the decline of the polis to Saint Augustine. Since, despite its ostensible purpose, it was never written as a textbook, it does not suffer as a textbook would from being "antiquated." Even where, in the light of the "state of science," one may be inclined to come to different conclusions, Voegelin's responses to the problems of the period suggest avenues of investigation that are still little traveled. The reflections that emerge from his treatment of these particular materials remain pertinent to universal concerns regarding the order of human existence in society and history.

Voegelin experienced the historical process Max Weber described as disenchantment as the coming apart of an evocation of order. When the spell is broken, there is no going back. Ossified symbols do not mediate order, but are the objects and means of ideological contention. The solution must be sought on the far side of the crisis. The modern phenomenon, Voegelin argues, is not unique. It has parallels in the past, and such parallels are instructive for our present predicament. The "spiritual disintegration" of the Hellenic world inaugurated a long process of transition in the self-understanding of Mediterranean and European man. It witnessed the emergence of ideas and the transformation of symbols that have marked the path

of Western civilization for better or for worse: Alexander's evocation of the unity of mankind, the idea of the path of empire, etc. Voegelin conceives the period as one of turmoil and instability. Evocations of spiritual community fail to find institutional expression while organizations of power flail about in search of legitimating spiritual substance until a temporary balance is achieved in the medieval synthesis.



In editing the typescript I have made as few changes as possible. I have corrected obvious typing errors and errors of transcription. I have supplied an occasional missing verb and on very few occasions changed a word that did not mean what the author clearly intended it to mean (for example, replacing "outspoken" with "deliberate"). I have sometimes transposed the order of words, for the sake of greater clarity. I have not sought to interrupt the strings of semicolons characteristic of Voegelin's style, except in one or two places where a mere change of punctuation made for a more manageable English sentence, without disturbing the flow of the paragraph. The most far-reaching stylistic change I felt compelled to make was in Voegelin's use of the definite article, that trap for even the most accomplished nonnative speaker of English. This editorial change involves only one important issue of nuance: writing "the Christ" is calculated to evoke the Greek participle indicating "the anointed one" and therefore awaken the reader from a complacent familiarity with a name to an understanding of the evocative power of a symbolic figure. It is nonetheless very awkward. Having drawn the reader's attention here to what I take to be Voegelin's intention, I have eliminated the definite article in the text. I have sometimes provided brief explanations of facts that may not be familiar to the general reader or amplified Voegelin's meaning. Such notes are in square brackets. Names have been rendered in the form most familiar to English-speaking readers—for example, Octavian, Isaiah. I have rephrased Voegelin's references to earlier passages of the original manuscript that cannot be recovered or have been omitted on the grounds I mentioned above. The complete table of contents (Appendix B) will allow the reader to place the section presented here in the order originally intended by the author. Hyphenation, punctuation, word compounding, the use of numbers, etc., have been made to conform with standard American usage and the style

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME I

adopted in the series. References to ancient authors follow the divisions and subdivisions of the standard editions; abbreviations follow the usage of *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. My editor's notes are indicated by brackets.

A grant from the Graduate Committee for the Humanities of the University of Colorado, Boulder, permitted me to examine the manuscript and other documents in the Voegelin Archive at the Hoover Institution at Stanford. Paul Caringella was ■ valuable guide and gracious host. Conversations with Thomas Hollweck and Jürgen Gebhardt have been very useful in preparing this edition. Ellis Sandoz has been forthcoming with advice and encouragement. I am also indebted to the intellectual generosity of Peter Weber-Schäfer.

ATHANASIOS MOULAKIS





**HELLENISM, ROME, AND  
EARLY CHRISTIANITY**



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## Introduction

### *The Spiritual Disintegration*

The final stages of the political breakdown of Hellas were accompanied by the type of literary production that might be expected under the circumstances. Athenian opinion was divided between ■ nationalist party, which wanted to make a last stand against Macedon, and a Macedonian party, which desired cooperation with, and submission to, the northern monarchy for the purpose of a pan-Hellenic war against Persia. The cleavage of opinion found its expression in the speeches of Demosthenes against Macedon and the speeches and pamphlets of Isocrates in its favor.

This type of literature, though well preserved, is, however, not of primary interest to the student of ideas. The last spasm in which the pathos of the polis expires is overshadowed by that great evolution of Greek thought in the period between Socrates and Alexander, which does not follow Plato's heroic attempt to create a new Hellas out of the forces of his soul, but which continues instead the process of intellectual disintegration that had become fully visible in the age of the Sophists. The life and death of Socrates mark an epoch for this further evolution quite as much as for the line of thought represented by Plato. The symptoms of an intellectual emigration from the polis can be found as early as the sixth century, but the literary expression of ■ definitely apolitical attitude, which now appears in the works of the Cynic, Cyrenaic, and Epicurean schools, traces its ideas back to the teachings and to the conduct of life of Socrates. This problem of apolitism, however, with which we have to deal now, is somewhat complicated in structure and requires ■ few words of systematic comment.

## a. The Problem of Apolitism

If a political cosmion is intact, or at least holds together fairly well, the political literature that dominates the historical scene is more or less closely related to its magic evocation. The historian of ideas normally has access only to the ideas of those groups in a political society that live under its magic spell and form its activist ruling center; he has no opportunity to learn very much about the thoughts and attitudes of those sectors of society that are formed by subject and dependent groups, as long as these sectors obey and do not engage in revolutionary activity. What we call political ideas are, in a well-consolidated period, the ideas of those who walk in the light, or at the best of those who have a chance to raise their heads sufficiently high to make their voices heard. The thoughts and attitudes of the vast silent masses are almost unknown. We know in definite cases, like that of Ikhnaton, that a factor in the quick disappearance of his system was the religious dissatisfaction of the masses in regard to an emanation of divine power that reached them only after it had traveled a considerable distance and that had, for their personal life, no other manifest result than the duty of hard work under exacting masters. We also know that Plato became aware of this problem; for he introduced a special myth in order to keep in obedience the masses who otherwise might not have much use for a Son of God if the only part of his message they could understand was the order to provide economic support for him and his followers. [Archaic and classical] Greek political thought is the thought of a small ruling class. About the helots and perioeci, about metics and slaves, we know nothing except that mystery cults must have had a function for them, similar to that of the Osiris cult for the subject people of Egypt.

The thoughts of a subject population present a thorny problem at any time. In a pre-Christian civilization like the Hellenic, it is particularly complicated because the active participation in the magic cosmion is, in principle, confined to a definite body of citizens, while vast sections of the subject population are relegated to a formally apolitical status. While in a Christian civilization the status of subjection and obedience may be sanctioned by the social order, it is at least legitimate for a thinker to reflect on the personality problems of the governed and to instruct the governor to adjust the principles of his rule to the idea that his subjects are

his brethren in Christ. To have introduced into the Spartan state, or into the Athenian polis of the classic period, any idea that the government should be conducted with due respect for the personal values or for the needs of the apolitical subject majority would have been considered madness; a demand of this kind would have been even sacrilegious.

In Greek thought, therefore, we have to deal with the problem of apolitism under two frequently overlapping aspects. The first aspect is that of actual apolitism, meaning thereby the sentiments of persons who have either no chance or no desire to rule. These sentiments may be found in all strata of Greek society, with citizens as well as with the noncitizen population of the polis. The second aspect is that of formal apolitism, meaning thereby the formal status of noncitizenship, be it as a free noncitizen or as a slave. The first of these problems is relevant at all times, in our modern Western civilization as well as in antiquity. The second problem originates the great movement that ends with the recognition of the value of human personality; so that, as a consequence of such recognition, every member of the population will receive status within the political community, though it may be a very lowly status.

## b. Political and Apolitical Revolutions

The upsurge of Greek apolitism presents, therefore, variations that we do not encounter in the Christian period, though in the nature of the case there must be a basic complex of parallel phenomena. In order to bring the problem into focus, let us first distinguish between politically motivated and apolitically motivated revolutionary movements. By a politically motivated movement we mean the revolutionary unrest of a nonruling stratum of society that tends to break up the established order of the cosmion without destroying the cosmion itself; the attack on the prevalent ideas has the purpose of redistributing power and of gaining the ruling position for a new group with new ideas of government. Of this nature are those movements in the Hellenic polis that replaced the early monarchic order by the rule of aristocratic families, as well as the further constitutional reforms of Athens that extended political influence to subaristocratic propertied strata of the citizenry. In the same class belong the European revolutions that replaced the ancien régime of

the estates by the rule of bourgeois society. Revolutions of this type imply that the new ruling class, though it may be numerically larger than its predecessor, is still a rather small minority in proportion to the population remaining in the status of subjects, and that the will to rule, therefore, still essentially determines its political attitude.

Revolutionary movements change their color entirely if they express the attitude of groups who are desirous of improving the circumstances of their everyday life. Such groups frequently model their aims according to the standards of the upper classes of the moment, without, however, having any desire to obtain the improvement of circumstances through the shouldering of rulership and its obligations. The case is perhaps best exemplified by that element in the complex of Marxist sentiments which finds its dogmatic expression in the idea that in the perfect society the state will wither away and consequently the tension of rulership will disappear. In Hellas we encounter the idea of apolitical existence as an instrument of critique as early as the eighth century in the paradisiacal fable of Hesiod. But the first symptom of a serious disintegration of the social body through the increase of an ahistoric and apolitical element in the population does not become visible before the sixth century. The Solonic reform, 594, encouraged the extension of citizenship to immigrant artisans; and Peisistratus (561-527) introduced the cult of Dionysus, membership in which cut across the traditional phratries, with the deliberate purpose of destroying the social cohesion of the old families and, consequently, of diminishing their influence. During the latter half of the fifth and the first half of the fourth century, there developed, parallel with the democratization of the constitution, the sentiment that envisages the state as a going concern out of which the mass of the poor citizens can make a comfortable living. The trend reached its fatal climax during the death struggle of Athens against Philip [II of Macedon]. After the dissolution of the Athenian empire in 355, a pacifist party gained power in Athens and all financial surpluses were collected in a theoric fund, which provided for theatrical and other entertainment of the Athenian masses. When, in 349, the Olynthians appealed for help against Philip, Demosthenes could not persuade the people to use the entertainment fund for military purposes, and the Olynthian phase of the war ended with the defeat of Athens. Only in 339, when the direct assault on Athens was imminent, could the money be used for the war; but then it was too

late; the year 338 and the battle of Chaeronea brought the end. A comparable phenomenon in our civilization is the pacifist attitude and the ideal of comfort adopted by the working and middle classes of the Western democracies after the First World War. The incident of the theoric fund has its close parallel in recent French history; the government of Léon Blum introduced the forty-hour week, and thereby seriously diminished the productive power of the nation, at a time when the exigencies of the situation required the utmost effort to increase the production of war materials.

### c. Formal Apolitism

The phenomena described so far are of a more or less general nature; they recur whenever the paradisiacal attitudes of the apolitic and ahistoric working and lower middle classes become socially effective through ■ democratic organization of government. Nevertheless, they reveal certain specifically Greek peculiarities that we have to consider. While the Western European proletarian and middle classes belong, on the whole, to the national stock, a certain proportion of the Athenian poorer citizens belonged by descent to the formally apolitical section of the population and owed its formal political status to reception into the community of citizens. In the second half of the fifth century this marginal situation was accentuated through legislative acts that withdrew citizenship in ■ wholesale fashion from persons who had one noncitizen parent. This problem of formal apolity has no parallel in modern Western societies; the attitudes to which it led should be carefully distinguished from the factually apolitical state of mind and its expression of paradisiacal ideals. The distinction is all the more necessary because the issue has been obscured by the Marxist interpretation of history, which subtly creeps into the work of historians who would be greatly surprised if they became aware of the origin of their ideas. The modern proletarian movements have induced Marx and Engels, and ■ host of scholars following them, to interpret revolutionary movements of the working population in Greece and Rome by analogy to modern phenomena. This interpretation by analogy can be considered relevant only if one accepts the unwarranted assumption that the economic status of groups is the all-decisive factor in history. As we have seen by now, the parallels run somewhat differently. While in both cases ■ state of

poverty is doubtless ■ strong cause for unrest, the modern proletarian movement is in its aims paradisiacal; it is directed toward transforming into an exploitable paradise the very society of which the worker is a part. The international component that reveals ■ tendency to erect the state of poverty into ■ state of formal apolitism (the proletarian has no fatherland) is in practice negligible; it has found ■ measure of realization only in the Soviet Union where the "national" proletarian republics were parts of the Russian empire before the Bolshevik revolution; and even under these very special conditions, the judgment on the measure of realization will have to remain in suspense for the time being. In the Western national states no labor leader has ever dreamed of persuading his followers that, considering the community of apolitism between the workers of the world, they should create ■ paradise equal for all; that, for instance, they should equalize wages and living conditions between the workers of Great Britain and the workers of India, or of white and native labor in an African colony. Hitherto, at least, the labor organizations of Western countries consider the national wealth that has accumulated in the aristocratic and bourgeois periods of government as their group property; and they show no intention of sharing it with workers of other countries and races on the ground of a common status of apolitism. Hence we may say that the expression of formal apolitism in the realm of ideas is ■ distinctly Greek phenomenon. The interaction between the two types of apolitism in the process of Hellenic disintegration may be formulated in the following manner: the sentiments of actual apolitism first penetrate and disintegrate the polis with their paradisiacal spiritual attitude, while the formal status of apolitism finds its independent spiritual expression at ■ time when the first process has taken effect to such a degree that the formally apolitical groups are allowed to raise their voice in public.

#### d. The Foreign Personnel of the Philosophers

The change of attitude toward the polis is accompanied, and to a considerable extent caused, by ■ change in the personnel of the philosophers.<sup>1</sup> The number of men of non-Hellenic origin among

1. [What is meant is not that philosophers had foreign personnel but that they themselves were preponderantly of foreign—that is, non-Greek—origin.]



Greek thinkers increases significantly. Antisthenes, the founder of the Cynic school, was the son of an Athenian citizen and a Thracian slave woman; and a considerable number of his followers were Phoenicians, Asiatic Greeks, and Thracians. Diogenes was a banker's son from Sinope on the Black Sea. Aristippus, the founder of the Cyrenaic school, came from Africa. Zeno, the founder of the Stoic school, was a Phoenician from Cyprus, and he had among his followers a goodly sprinkling of Cypriots, of men from the Asiatic mainland, and later even from Mesopotamia. In an incipient form we can observe the penetration of the West with Eastern personnel and ideas, which develops on a grand scale in the imperial period of Greco-Roman civilization. Greek civilization is to spread imperially farther and farther into the Near East; the Greek language becomes the common language of the eastern Mediterranean in the form of the *koine*; but the ideas expressed in this *koine*, though showing a streak of the Greek heritage, are those of Easterners, and they reflect the Eastern origin of the thinkers.

### e. The New Category of the School

In the period under observation, the foreigners appear individually and their fundamental attitude of apolitism expresses itself in the attempts to salvage a rule of conduct out of the wreck of the polis. Those forces of new community life that become visible create the form of the "school"; in some cases, such as, for instance, the Epicureans, the school assumes the characteristics of a sect that resembles, in its function for its members, the Christian communities and exists alongside them for centuries. When in a long-drawn-out process the vacuum left by the polis is at last filled by the Eastern religious movements and when Christianity becomes predominant, the "school" loses its function as a meeting place for individuals from the vast Eastern geographical area, and for the populations or new religious communities in their respective regions. When this stage is reached, when the new community movement has penetrated into the broad mass of the people, the movement that started in opposition to the polis becomes political again. At this time we can observe the curious and not always sufficiently understood process in which the intellectual apparatus of Athens is brought to bear upon the Christian communities. Under the titles of orthodoxy and heresy, of Nestorianism, Jacobitism,

Monophysitism, Arianism, and so forth, African, Egyptian, Syrian, Germanic, Cappadocian, and Greek populations take shape as new political bodies, frequently intermingling territorially, and fighting each other to death, like the Hellenic poleis, only this time over points of Christology. The fight may be said to be in some respects even deeper in its hatred than the fight of the poleis, for the new politico-religious communities are beset by the permanent tension between the idea of an apolitic, purified conduct of life that animates the select, and the communal life of the institutions that necessarily deteriorates again and again into forms more acceptable to the mass of the people. Hence the puritanical reform movements become ■ permanent source of internal warfare and sometimes culminate in ■ major catastrophe, as in the case of the iconoclastic policy of the Isaurian and Armenian emperors [of the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) empire] of the eighth and ninth centuries A.D.

We have anticipated the later development at this point because, by this anticipation, we hope to overcome the misunderstanding of the post-Socratic schools ■■ being proletarian movements; we have to ■■■ these movements rather in the perspective of the millennium of Eastern political problems, which they outline in some of their fundamental features.

## f. The Cynics

The most characteristic representatives of the new attitude seem to have been the Cynics. Unfortunately, however, the systematic setting of their ideas is unknown.<sup>2</sup> Both of the major treatises, *On the Law or On the Republic* by Antisthenes (ca. 444–365) and the *Republic* of Diogenes (ca. 412–323), are lost. This is all the more regrettable because Zeno, the founder of the Stoic school, started as a Cynic, and if it were possible to compare Zeno's *Republic*, which is also lost, with the earlier Cynic treatises we could perhaps lay a finger on the point of transition from the Greek experience of apolitism to the Phoenician. As the matter stands, we are confined to the interpretation of fragments, of critical references, and of secondary material. The starting point seems to have been the idea expounded by Socrates that it is an attribute of the divinity to have

2. For ■ survey of the Cynic movement, see Donald R. Dudley, *A History of Cynicism, from Diogenes to the Sixth Century* (London, 1937).

no wants, and that to have as few wants as possible is the nearest approach to divinity for men. The idea was implied in the Platonic thesis that God is the measure of all things; and we found it again in the Aristotelian *autarkeia* [self-sufficiency] as the category of perfect existence, pervading the hierarchy of the universe, from God, through the polis, to man. The new attitude of the Cynics expresses itself systematically through the omission of the polis from the hierarchy of the self-sufficient entities. The life in the polis is no longer the perfect life. As a consequence, the Cynics can dismiss the fundamental Aristotelian problem of construing the *bios theoretikos* [contemplative life] as a life of political action. Ever since the early Ionians the Greek thinkers had directed their criticism against the polis; the Cynic apolitism metamorphoses this tradition of criticism into a comprehensive system of negations. As a positive center nothing is left but a set of ascetic ideals and the sacrifice to the divinity through worthy individual conduct. The values of the polis negated included the Homeric gods, memories of the Persian wars, Attic drama, religious festivals and games, participation in political life, and the institutions of property and family. Moreover, since true liberty consisted for the Cynics in the freedom of the soul from vices, the divisions between citizens and slaves, between Greeks and barbarians, were declared to be irrelevant.

The new credo, however, was not revolutionary in the sense that the devaluation of the life of the polis did not lead to demands for reform. The Cynics did not demand, for instance, the abolition of slavery; they were perfectly willing to live in the status of slaves because the condition of slavery was a matter of indifference to the wise man. Neither did they demand the abolition of private property or wealth; they simply preferred to live as beggars because a life of poverty insures the self-sufficiency of man. In view of such indifference toward social institutions, and in the absence of sufficient sources, it is difficult to decide whether Antisthenes and Diogenes advanced any idea of a primitive, ascetic community life that would ultimately replace the life of the polis. It seems more probable that Cynic asceticism had an aristocratic tinge; insofar as it contained an appeal, it must have appealed to men who had the spiritual energy and the force of character to forgo the amenities of a civilized life that had lost its magic; the Cynics probably left alone the broad masses who are incapable of leading a life of asceticism. The only

idea that emerges with any clarity from the scant fragments of Diogenes is that the whole world, the cosmos, is the fatherland of the wise man; he is at home everywhere and nowhere, regardless of external conditions; the wise man is ■ citizen, not of the polis, but of the cosmopolis.<sup>3</sup>

### g. Diogenes and Plato

The idea of the cosmopolis gained its broad effectiveness through the Stoic school. Nevertheless, the tremendous step of its creation through Diogenes should perhaps receive more credit and attention than it usually does. When Zeno came to Athens from Cyprus, ca. 314, he visited the schools of Athens. His survey completed, he decided to join the Cynics because he believed them to be the only true heirs of Socrates; the Academy and Lyceum, the foundations of Plato and Aristotle, seemed stale to him. The appeal that Cynicism held for an Oriental like Zeno certainly had something to do with cosmopolitanism. The great epoch in Greek spiritual history marked by the death of Socrates exhausted the problem of the polis for men of the highest spiritual rank. The grandeur of Plato's new polis should not obscure the fact that it had its reality in the soul of one man and that, in its contact with environmental reality, it simmered down to the school of the Academy. If it were not for the greatness of Plato's personality, his attempt would have a touch of the quixotic. In any event, with the death of the founder the reality of his polis had lost its creative source. Its conversion into an ideal by Aristotle was ■ great intellectual achievement, but ■■ far as the life of the soul is concerned it resembled ■ dissection on ■ corpse. With all due respect for the difference of stature between Plato and Diogenes, I believe, therefore, that the two men have to be ranked side by side. The one used the powers of his soul for the regeneration of the mode of life to which he was tied by birth and tradition; the other used them for the evocation of a community idea that could give meaning to the life of the apolitical individual. The polis of Plato and the cosmopolis of Diogenes are both dreams of great souls. One might even venture an argument that would

3. Wilhelm Nestle's selection and translation of fragments in *Die Sokratiker* (Jena, 1922) is the most convenient access to the sources. Most of the fragments of Diogenes ■■ gleaned from Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, bk. VI.

tend to diminish the distance between the two personalities. We had occasion to observe [in sections of the "History" absorbed by *Order and History*] the enormous span of inner time in the Platonic work, extending from the earlier pharaonic to anticipations of the later papal evocation. Nevertheless, we should not forget that the inner evolution of Plato's soul did not transcend the institutional pattern of the polis; furthermore this pattern was familiar to him in its historical details—he did not have to invent it. The cosmopolis of Diogenes was institutionally a blank, and we may find it understandable that the first apparition of the dream was shadowy and mainly negative. It required the Asiatic background of the Stoics, the empires of Alexander and his successors, the Roman empire and Christianity, the Sassanid empire and Manichaeism, and, finally, the conquest of Rome through Alaric, in order to fill up the vastness of this dream with sufficient historical materials. Only then could it crystallize in Saint Augustine's ideas of the *civitas Dei* and the *civitas terrena* and in his periodization of history. Plato and Diogenes seem to be spiritual brothers in a subtle way—the one manifesting the great tension of the soul that spans the centuries, the other having the vision of the new worldwide scene on which the soul will have to act.

#### h. Aristippus—The Political Function of Psychology

Color is added to the picture of the period through the life and teaching of Aristippus of Cyrene (ca. 435–365). He also belongs to the new group of apolitical philosophers; and he makes ~~some~~ use of the idea of cosmopolitanism for the purpose of justifying his withdrawal from the polis. His peculiar contribution is, however, the transition from an ethical to a psychological theory. He is the first psychologist in the sense that he attempts an explanation of human action through a psychology of motives. He finds the fundamental motive of action in the search for *hedone*, for pleasure. The details of his psychological theory, however, are of less interest to us than the fact that psychological interpretation makes its appearance in the Greek world. The appearance of psychology is a recurrent phenomenon in political societies. It marks the period when the traditional principles and standards of conduct lose their

authority and when, correspondingly, the behavior of man loses its orientation. At this juncture, the mechanism of disoriented behavior becomes an object of interest. On a grand scale we can observe this growth of psychology in our modern Western civilization: how psychology appears after the great religious upheavals of the sixteenth century in the work of Hobbes, Pascal, and La Rochefoucauld; how it gains momentum, through the psychology of pleasure and pain, in the eighteenth century; until it becomes, with the end of the nineteenth century, the thundering chorus accompanying the destruction of our ethical and political systems. The appearance of psychology does not mean that the preceding periods have no psychological insight. Such psychological knowledge as exists is intimately related, however, with the magic evocation of the political cosmion; it is deeply embedded in the evocation ideas, as well as in the philosophy of conduct that enjoins the behavior patterns most suitable to express the substance of the evocation and to preserve its historical existence. The psychological knowledge is implied; it does not assume the explicit form of a scientific system; but it exists nevertheless, and it extends to problems that are frequently neglected by the scientific psychology of the period of disintegration. The awareness of Socrates and Plato, for instance, that a political community cannot exist for long unless the cohesion of its members is secured effectively through a common spiritual bond is, of course, a psychological insight of the first order. Precisely the class of problems, however, of which this insight is an example is typically neglected (though the statement requires certain qualifications) by the psychologists in the period of disintegration because the magically disillusioned personality is their principal object of inquiry.<sup>4</sup>

### i. The Garden of Epicurus

Although it involves a jump in chronology, and although good reasons could be given for not treating Epicurus (341-270) before Alexander, I prefer to place his teaching in this context because we find in it the hedonistic calculus consciously applied to the problems of community life. The Garden of Epicurus at Athens represents the most perfect unfolding of the potentialities inherent in the

4. For the fragments of Aristippus see Nestle, *Die Sokratiker*, and the sources given there, particularly Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, bk. II.

foundation of a school. Epicurus founded a school of conduct in the double sense of establishing a body of doctrine that assists in leading the ideal life and of founding a community in which the ideal conduct is practiced. In contrast with the Academy and the Lyceum, the school of Epicurus is not a place for intellectual training and scientific research; the teachings of the founder assumed even in his lifetime the form of a dogma, to be accepted without doubts and to be transmitted unchanged from generation to generation. As a consequence, the school, which remained in existence through four centuries, acquired the character of a sect; because of this character it was ranked with the early Christian communities, and, together with them, it was accused for its atheism. Its appeal does not go to the intellectuals, but to worried tender souls; and it receives women and children into the community.

The school aims to implant ataraxy, that is, peace of mind, into the souls of its members. This aim is an ominous symptom of that beginning of restlessness of the soul that is to increase in the following centuries, until the soul becomes, in the late Roman period, a seething chaos of anxieties and superstitions. Plato had developed the concept of *nosos* to indicate the disorder of a mind that has lost its religious and spiritual orientation; now, with the breakdown of the polis, the *nosos* becomes a widespread social phenomenon and reaches the point of a pathological warping of the mind. The *nosos* of the mind is, just as the rise of psychology, a symptom of political disintegration. The main function of the political cosmion is, as we have seen, to assuage the existential anxiety of man by giving to his soul, through the magic evocation of the community, the assurance of having a meaningful place in a well-ordered cosmos. When the magic spell loses its force, the primordial anxieties are set free again; the surrounding world becomes a disorderly vastness, full of unknown dangers, pressing in on the human soul; and the mind that is exposed to this experience of disorder may crack under the strain; it may become disorganized to the point that it will grope for any idea or person that seems to hold out a promise of protection and support. The social phenomena accompanying this period were, in the Hellenistic time as in our own, the prodigious increase in the number of private circles, of clubs, of spiritual and semireligious communities and schools of thought, the rise of new religious movements and sects, the appearance of saviors and leaders, and the foundation of philosophies of conduct. The community of Epicurus

has been compared to the Society of Friends, and they have certainly some features in common; but even more suggestive is a comparison with Sigmund Freud and psychoanalysis, considering the sectarian character of the community as well as its distinct aim of curing the disorder of the mind through the persuasive dissolution of anxieties and obsessions, or, as we call them today, of complexes and neuroses.<sup>5</sup>

The Epicurean system, as far as we know it from the extant sources, mainly preserved by Diogenes Laertius and through Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*, is an ingenious attempt to transfer earlier ideas in such a manner that they will serve the purpose of creating ataraxy. The foundation is a materialistic philosophy of nature, generously borrowing from Democritus. It explains the universe and man as resulting from the movement of atoms, and it interprets the shapes of corporeal things, as well as the soul of man, as temporary combinations of particles of matter. Although this theory contains the shrewd original idea that atoms have a "swerve" in their movement (because otherwise they would fall eternally in parallel lines without ever entering into combinations), and that this "swerve" in man is what is called "free will," its primary purpose is not an inquiry into nature. The materialistic metaphysics rather serves the purpose of eliminating nature as a source of disturbances of the soul, by dissociating it radically from all action of the gods. If nature in general and the celestial bodies in particular do not embody divinities, as they were thought to do in popular belief, but are merely moving matter, a large section of the environment of men will be emptied of powers potentially to be feared. The introduction of the "swerve," on the other hand, counteracts the sentiment of depression that might be induced by a deterministic belief in soulless matter as the ultimate substance. The system, thus, combines exquisitely the advantages of materialism with those of a belief in the freedom of the will. Since the soul of man is nothing but a combination of atoms, and since death, consequently, can mean nothing but the dissolution of this combination, the theory could be turned to the allaying of the fear of death. "Death, therefore, the most awful of evils, is nothing to

5. For the sources see Cyril Bailey, *Epicurus: The Extant Remains* (Oxford, 1926). On Epicurus see Cyril Bailey, *The Greek Atomists and Epicurus* (Oxford, 1928); A. E. Taylor, *Epicurus* (London, 1911); J. M. Guyau, *La morale d'Epicure, et ses rapports avec les doctrines contemporaines*, 6th ed. (Paris, 1917).



us, seeing that, when we are, death is not come, and, when death is come, we are not."<sup>6</sup> Epicurus does not deny the existence of the gods, but he removes them to an immortal realm of perfect tranquillity. In this realm, the gods live without concern about the fate of men; and they cannot be reached by human prayer or worship; hence, any practice of religion or superstition is devoid of sense.

Man is thrown back on his own resources; he has to make the best of the few years that are given to him; and, as the guiding principle of conduct, he has to follow his nature, which directs him toward the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. At this point, the psychology of Aristippus enters the teaching of Epicurus; but, like the materialism of Democritus, it becomes transformed pragmatically in the process. Aristippus developed the pursuit of pleasure as a fine art, exhausting the possibilities of cultivated society, as well as those of erotic variations and of the art of cooking. Epicurus introduced a calculus of pleasure as an instrument for achieving ataraxy; the conduct that would result in ataraxy was to be determined through an intelligent weighing of pleasures under the aspect of their possibly painful consequences. There was nothing of the lusty animal in Epicurus, nor of the noble materialism of a refined sensuality; there was in him only a great desire for quiet and for absence of pain. In the end, therefore, the calculus of pleasure would produce an attitude that was rather close to asceticism. It was even possible to build into this curious system of pleasures the Platonic virtues of wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice. Again the virtues were not resumed because of their intrinsic value as the powers that organize the ethically mature personality, but rather because their cultivation would minimize pain, and, in particular, because justice would secure the affection and goodwill of fellowmen. In this endeavor to secure affection and goodwill, we probably touch on the secret of the Epicurean appeal, that is, on the great friendliness of Epicurus himself, as well as his sincere desire to help other men in the troubles of their souls. These were the qualities that let him appear to many as a *soter*, a savior. This genuine helpfulness also would account for the missionary element in Epicureanism and for its mild aggressiveness with regard to superstitions in general; a mild aggressiveness only,

6. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, bk. X, 125.

not going to the extreme of unpleasant martyrdom. This mild, friendly, unobtrusive, psychologically shrewd and slightly parasitic society of frightened little men in the garden is a fitting symbol of the end of Hellas.

*Part One*  
*From Alexander to Actium*





## Alexander

With Macedon a political unit enters the stage of history that represents in the nature of its social structure a phase preceding the Hellenic polis. The country emerges in the fourth century from a period of tribal organization and primitive monarchy, similar in many respects to the Greek social conditions as reflected in the Homeric epic. The element of heroic monarchy, preceding synecism [the drawing together of the population of spread-out settlements to form a city], is the factor that enables the Macedonian military organization to achieve the task for which the polis had proved unfit. In spite of the internal structural differences between Greece and Macedon, the appearance of Alexander is so readily assumed to be a continuation of Hellenic history that it is necessary to stress the strangeness of the new power. Despite the wealth of information that we possess for this period, the rise of Macedon and the imperial creation of Alexander remain enigmatic.<sup>1</sup>

### §1. Macedon

There is still no consensus as to who the Macedonians were. The present state of the argument seems to be that the Macedonians as a people were probably ethnically not very different from the Greeks,

1. For the general history of this period see the Cambridge Ancient History [hereafter CAH], vols. 6 (1927) and 7 (1928). Also Julius Jüttner, *Hellenen und Barbaren* (Leipzig, 1923); Julius Kaerst, *Geschichte des Hellenismus*, vol. 1, 3d. ed. (Leipzig, 1927); vol. 2, 2d ed. (Leipzig, 1926); Max Mühl, *Die Antike Menschheitsidee in der geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (Leipzig, 1928); Ulrich Wilcken, *Alexander der Grosse* (Leipzig, 1931); *Alexander the Great*, ed. Eubene N. Borza, trans. G. C. Richards (New York, 1967); W. W. Tarn, *Hellenistic Civilization*, 2d. ed. (London 1936). On the ideas of Alexander specifically see W. W. Tarn, *Alexander the Great and the Unity of Mankind*, Proceedings of the British Academy, vol. 19 (London, 1933).

but that they were not Hellenes by language and civilization. Such Greek elements ~~as~~ can be discerned ~~seem~~ to be due to a more or less effective Hellenization of the nobility. The non-Hellenic civilization, and particularly the institution of the monarchy, long extinct in Hellas proper, was the great obstacle to an incorporation of the Greek poleis into the Macedonian state. The construction of the Macedonian hegemony over Hellas remained ~~a~~ problem throughout the period of Alexander. In the League of Corinth, the confederated Greek cities were represented by their delegates, while the Macedonian king held the office of president, which implied the command of the federal army; but Macedon herself was not ~~a~~ member of the league. A similar construction had been adopted when, after the Holy War, the Phocians were expelled from the Delphic Amphictyony and their place was taken, again not by Macedon, but by Philip in person. The royal house, descended according to the family myth from Heracles, was accepted as Hellenic.

The meteoric rise of Macedon from her former comparative insignificance, followed by her disappearance into insignificance after the clash with Rome, is another somewhat obscure phenomenon, considering the undoubted greatness and efficiency not only of Philip and Alexander but of the Macedonian lords in general, who after the death of Alexander revealed their stature ~~as~~ kings. Whatever the slow-working factors that entered into the always mysterious growth of a people into ~~an~~ agent of history, the critical point was reached with the national unification and military organization of Philip II. The circumstances contributing to his achievement were typical of a situation of this kind: the fortunate ending of internal dynastic quarrels through a strong personality; increasing wealth and manpower; a sufficient amalgamation of the striking power of a comparatively primitive monarchy with the refinements of the superior Hellenic civilization in the upper social stratum; and, finally, the historic accident that Philip had spent his youth ~~as~~ a hostage at Thebes acquiring there thorough knowledge of the internal weakness of the polis world, which he could use later with psychological skill for the conquest of the Greek cities. Philip apparently was able to reorganize the Macedonian cavalry, drawn from the landed aristocracy, and to attach it more closely to his person through the formation of the "Companions of the King's Person," consisting of an inner circle of young noblemen. The effect can be compared to the transformation of the French aristocracy into

■ court nobility under Louis XIV, parallel with the administrative unification of the realm. In addition, the free small landholders were organized in ■■ infantry formation called the Foot Companions. This army of "King's Companions" was a national fighting instrument, employing the recent innovations in tactics developed by the Thebans and by the professional armies of Iphicrates; it did not depend on a single arm, but operated with ■■ efficient combination of cavalry and infantry, of light auxiliary troops and the Greek naval forces. These remarks about military technique ~~are~~ not made for their own sake, but in order to bring out the peculiar modernistic and rational element in the Macedonian attitude, in this respect perhaps comparable to the willingness and ability of the Japanese to avail themselves of techniques that have grown on foreign soil. The adaptability of the Macedonians is one of the sources of their superior military effectiveness, ■■ compared with the more conservative Hellenic fighting methods; it enabled Alexander and his generals to deal successfully with various unusual tactical problems such as the siege of Phoenician sea fortresses and [confronting] the elephant troops of Porus.

## §2. Olympias—The Son of God

Finally, a word is necessary concerning Alexander's mother, Olympias. The Epirote princess was ■ powerful orgiastic personality, given to savage religious transports. She was an initiate in the cults of Orpheus and Dionysus, and she was, ■■ can be gleaned from Plutarch, ■ member of the cult of ■ serpent god. Her relations to Philip and the birth of Alexander are surrounded by legend. In the night before the wedding Olympias was visited by ■ thunderbolt, and on a later occasion Philip found the serpent god in her bed, which seems to have cooled his affections. Philip's fatherhood of Alexander was considered doubtful, even by Philip; the doubt was important in the crisis of 337 that led to the flight of Alexander with Olympias and, in 336, to the assassination of Philip. The legend proved to be of great value later in connection with the deification of Alexander. A stream of elements enters from this source into post-Hellenic history that was alien to the polis. The first of the living gods appears, founding an empire. The parallel to the divine origin of Jesus is obvious, and it seems that the legend of the Annunciation is a concession of the early Christian generations

to the Greco-Roman environment, destined to make the "servant" of God more acceptable to the civilization that thought in terms of the "son" of God.

### §3. The Conquest

Considering the obscurity of his antecedents, it is not surprising that the actions and ideas of Alexander have given rise to divergent interpretations. We cannot follow any of them; he was neither the incarnation of Greek youthful heroism, nor a despot with Oriental inclinations, nor even a great empire builder. His specific quality is his personal intangibility—the intangibility of a strong mystic personality, of a dreamer with the ability to transfer his dreams into reality, and of a revolutionary because of his position between the civilizations of his age. His importance in history is determined not by his permanent achievements, but rather by the chains of events that he set in motion by his mere existence. He was one of the greatest catalytic forces in history. The overwhelming impression of his personality is caught in the story, reported by Plutarch, of Cassander, who long after the death of Alexander, when he was king of Macedon himself, shivered all over when he happened to see a statue of Alexander at Delphi and recovered only slowly from the fit.

Alexander did not have any coherent system of political ideas. We do not know what shape he would have given his empire, because at the time of his death the military conquest was still in progress and had reached a point where its aims had become vague. The campaigns had started as a war of the Greeks and Macedonians against Persia with the aim of removing forever the Asiatic danger. The military success had led to the permanent conquest of the Persian empire into its farthest reaches and into India; and, considering the strength of the military apparatus, further conquests in the direction of Rome and Carthage were in the realm of possibility. But even at the stage they had actually achieved, the value of the conquests had become doubtful. A situation had been reached that resembled in certain respects the Mongol conquests at their climax when a doubt crept in with regard to the purpose for which the multitude of nations should be dominated by a central power. The technical performance of the conquest was not backed by an idea, and, as in the later Mongol case, the unit of conquest, which could



hardly be called an empire, dissolved into smaller units after the exhilaration of the conquering drive was exhausted. The conquered peoples, widely divergent in their civilizations, had not been welded into a new political unit, and nothing indicated that this aim could be achieved at the time. Professor Tarn, who has given a splendid analysis of Alexander's empire, summarizes the resulting construction as follows:

In Egypt Alexander was an autocrat and a god. In Iran he was an autocrat, but not a god. In the Greek cities he was a god, but not an autocrat. In Macedonia he was neither autocrat nor god, but a quasi-constitutional king over against whom his people enjoyed certain customary rights.<sup>2</sup>

The countries enumerated by Professor Tarn were only the major units. Besides these there were the Cypriots, the Phoenicians, the temple states of Asia Minor, Lydia, Babylon, Caria, the Punjab, etc., each with its peculiar status differing from all the others.

#### §4. The Element of Imperial Rulership

No permanent order was established, but at least attempts were made at creating a spiritual substance for the empire that had been put together by military action. The two principal ideas that had to be evoked were those of the imperial ruler and of the imperial people. In both respects Alexander laid the foundations on which later centuries have continued to build. The actual relevance of the contributions of Alexander, however, is an object of controversy; some historians are inclined to overestimate them because they project into them later Hellenistic ideas of kingship; others under-rate them because the evocations were only tentative and did not find sufficient faith with the contemporaries. It is this situation that makes the evocation of Alexander so important for us, for here we have one of the rare occasions where we can watch an idea in the making.

The first controversy centers around the evocation of the god-king as the ruler of the new empire. Alexander's personal history furnishes an almost perfect catalog of the elements that have entered into the idea and institution of divine kingship, though in his

2. W. W. Tarn, *Alexander: The Conquest of the Far East*, CAH, vol. 6 (1927), chap. 13, 432 ff.

own case the elements did not congeal into a definite evocation. The deepest foundation on which his deity rests is indicated by the aforementioned legend of Olympias and the serpent or the thunderbolt. In primitive civilizations the serpent is the symbol of the ancestor who reincarnates himself in the newly born infant. The serpent reappears in the biography of Alexander in the legend of the two snakes that guided the king to the oasis of Ammon when the party had lost the way in the desert. This serpent, identified under the Ptolemies with the God Sarapis, has a permanent function in Egyptian Hellenistic kingship, and we shall meet it again as the serpent god who by his deathly bite preserved Cleopatra from the humiliation of a Roman triumph. At the temple of Ammon, Alexander was received by the priests as the son of the sun-god, as was every ruler of Egypt; and it is possible that he went through the regular Ammon ritual that bestowed upon the pharaoh the rule over all the living. While this recognition and bestowal had, at the moment, no importance outside Egypt, this and other elements were combined by Alexander's campaign-historiographer Callisthenes in a tentative evocation of divine kingship. Callisthenes elaborated the story of Alexander's visit to the oasis of Ammon, asserted that the God had actually declared that Alexander was not Philip's son but his own, and presented further evidence of Alexander's divinity, referring in particular to the *proskynesis* of the waves on the occasion of Alexander's passage at Mount Climax. The symbol of *proskynesis*, prostration before the king, introduced a Persian element into the picture. *Proskynesis* was a court ceremonial, which apparently did not imply recognition of royal divinity in Persia but which was understood in this sense by the Greeks. Alexander tried to introduce this custom, counting on Callisthenes for ideological support, but he experienced a surprise that showed the time was not yet ripe for the creation of a new imperial style. For the Macedonians did not even protest; they simply laughed at the suggestion, and Callisthenes suddenly discovered that there was a difference between the Asiatics and the Greeks, and that the custom should be confined to the former. The wavering of Callisthenes between a rather far-reaching divinization of the ruler and his reported exhortations against tyrants is a good example of what intellectuals are capable of doing, and also an indicator of the situation as far as Greece is concerned. In the Greek cities, Alexander was declared a son of Zeus for the legal reason that the polis constitution did not provide

for royal ordinances, when they became necessary for political reasons, the declaration of Alexander as God was a construction that permitted the issuing of royal decrees without otherwise tampering with the institutions. Deification in the Greek cities, however, did not imply a popular belief at the time in Alexander's divinity, but indicated rather the disintegration of the old religious order to the point where nobody cared if the hegemon declared himself a god. Only a few old-fashioned Macedonians, like Antipater, considered such actions impious.

### §5. Homonoia—The Empire People

To the imperial ruler corresponds the empire people.<sup>3</sup> We possess only two or three scanty fragments, reported by Arrian and Plutarch, which indicate that Alexander was inclined to deviate from the accepted Greek ideas about Hellenes and barbarians. One of the fragments credits him with the saying that "God is the common father of all men." Another reports that at the banquet at Opis he prayed to the Gods for a union of hearts and a commonwealth (*homonoia kai koinonia*) between Persians and Macedonians. The concept of *homonoia* is of particular interest because it permits us to gauge the movement of ideas. In the Hellenic period the concept was generally used in the context of exhortations to cease party strife within a polis; it signified, negatively, the absence of factional fighting. With Isocrates we find that the concept acquires an enlarged meaning. Isocrates advocates "war against the barbarians, *homonoia* among ourselves" (*Panegyric* 3). The concept embraces the Hellenic world. Alexander's prayer not only includes the Persians in the *homonoia*, but it seems that the king has given the idea a new function in the evocation of his empire. According to Eratosthenes,

Alexander believed that he had a mission from the deity to harmonize men generally and be the reconciler of the world, mixing men's lives and customs as in a loving cup, and treating the good as his kin, the bad as strangers; for he thought that the good man was the real Greek and the bad man the real barbarian.<sup>4</sup>

The idea of Alexander may not have gone beyond a desire to fuse the Macedonian and Persian aristocracies into one. Nevertheless

3. [That is, the people of the empire constituted as a people.]

4. Tarn, *Alexander the Great and the Unity of Mankind*, 127.

it marks the beginning of a great development. Homonoia became the basic community concept of the Hellenistic and later of the Roman world (*concordia*), and through the Epistles of Saint Paul the idea became one of the founding elements of democracy. Wherever the Christian community idea has penetrated and the category of like-mindedness is effective (to name a late example: John Dewey's social theory) we are faced by effects of Alexander's prayer at Opis. With the other element of Alexander's idea, the function of the king as the *harmostes*, the harmonizer of the world, we shall have to deal later.



## The Early Stoa

Alexander was strong enough to shatter the old world materially, but it took more than Alexander to create a new one spiritually. He conquered the world, but he barely touched the souls of men. The horizon of the world was thrown open, and the soul of man had now to be transformed so as to fit the new external framework. Zeno and his successors in the Stoa were the first to undertake the tremendous task, and some of their ideas have remained active in the constitution of Western political communities to this day. It is, however, impossible to survey them systematically because the works of the first three school heads, Zeno (301-261), Cleanthes (261-231), and Chrysippus (231-206), are preserved only in fragments and secondary reports. The best that can be given is an enumeration of leading principles and sentiments, without any hope of filling the systematic gaps or reconciling the contradictions.<sup>1</sup>

### §1. Equality—Origins in the Mother Cult

Zeno and a great number of his followers were Semitic Asiatics from the region stretching from Cyprus to Babylon. With them the influx of Oriental ideas began on a large scale; we have to be aware of the permanent presence of this factor, particularly because the ideas themselves frequently may be interpreted as possible internal evolutions of earlier Hellenic thought. A good example, illustrating this problem of a twofold interpretation, is the idea of the equality of men with which the Stoics are credited. Already in the age of the

1. Hans von Arnim, *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, 3 vols. (Leipzig, 1903); the fragments of Zeno and Cleanthes are contained in vol. 1. Also Wilhelm Nestle, *Die Nachsokratiker*, 2 vols. (Jena, 1923), with a fine introduction in vol. 1; the Stoic fragments are contained in vol. 2.

Sophists the idea became visible as an intellectual adventure and as a symptom of the disintegration of the polis institutions. It is easy to imagine that the idea would find increasing favor with the rise of apolitical metics and foreigners to a position where they could make themselves heard publicly, because for them it was a means to wedge into the established community ranks. It would be a mistake, though, to explain the momentum of this great idea merely as a product of social disintegration. Something deeper had to be stirred up to make it fully effective. And we touch on at least one important element of the idea of equality if we remember that the Semitic Stoics came from the civilizations that had kept alive the mother cult. The fragments do not permit us to trace the filiation in detail, but we catch a glimpse of them in the Zenonic doctrine, continuing Plato and Diogenes, of the desirability of a community of women, because in that case "we shall feel paternal affection for all children alike."<sup>2</sup> The meaning of this attitude becomes clearer in light of the materials collected by Bachofen on the idea of equality in Roman law. Bachofen drew attention to the fact that the passages in the *Digest* of Justinian that state the natural law of equality most clearly are those due to Ulpian, the Phoenician, and that their formula reveals their origin in the mother-cult civilization. The children are all equal to the mother who has brought them forth, and she does not give everything to one, but to each his portion, "suum cuique" (*Digest* 1.1.10).<sup>3</sup> The law according to nature is the law of the mother; according to this natural law all men are equal (*Digest* 50.17.32) and are born free (*Digest* 1.1.4). And in order to stress the origin of the idea in the procreative function, Ulpian extends its meaning beyond the human species to all living beings: "Natural law is what nature taught all living beings; for this law is not confined to the human species, but is common to all animals, to those who are born on the earth and in the sea, and to the birds" (*Digest*, 1.1.1).

It is rare, however, that we find in the higher civilizations unobscured traces of the mother cult period, and the passages of Ulpian disappear in a sea of ideas that reflect the institutions of the father society. But the scarcity of evidence does not diminish the importance of this source of the sentiment of equality. It is an accident

2. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, bk. VII, 131.

3. Johann-Jacob Bachofen, *Mutterrecht und Urreligion* (1861), 71.

that the principles of equality and liberty are so frequently linked to the facts of birth and procreation in the formulas of "born" or "created" equal. The existential basis of human life in birth and death is, indeed, the most convincing, though not the only, source from which an idea can be nourished that is so obviously not in accord with the inequality of men in their social environment.

## §2. Equality—The Equal Sparks of the Divine Substance

In the Stoic theory itself another root of the idea of equality comes to the fore, Oriental in its origin like the first. The life in agreement with the nature of the universe is, according to the Stoics, a life in agreement with the logos of the universe; the natural or common law, the *koinos nomos*, pervading the universe is the divine logos of which a spark, an *apospasma* [fragment], is living in every man, forming the center of his personality. In one of its more radical variations this conception leads to an interpretation of personality ■■ part of the collective mind, ultimately denying the independent substance of the human soul altogether. In its Arabic version the theory strongly influenced Western European thought and became in the thirteenth century a dangerous rival construction to the Christian personality idea. Since the eighteenth century we notice ■ revival of the idea, very clearly in Kant and Hegel, and decisively in the National Socialist and Fascist doctrines of community. The strict collectivism of the idea need not necessarily be egalitarian. The Stoic philosophers stress the connection of their conception with Heraclitus, whose Orientalism we discussed earlier.<sup>4</sup> And it is possible, indeed, to interpret the Stoic *koinos nomos* ■■ ■ continuation of the Heraclitean attempt at evolving the *koine* of the logos against the *koine* of the social heritage. Heraclitus, however, combined the idea of the common logos with an aristocratic construction that permitted him to rank men according to the degree of their gnosis [knowledge or understanding], while the Stoics stress the egalitarian consequence of their conception. Nevertheless, they preserve the Cynic aristocratic exaltation of the wise man. How the two positions—the equality through the *apospasma* in every

4. [Compare on Heraclitus *Order and History*, vol. II, *The World of the Polis* (Baton Rouge, 1957), 220–40.]

man, and the inequality of the wise and the worthless—are reconciled is not entirely clear from the fragments. It seems that, in the dichotomy of the wise and the worthless, we are faced by another fundamental Oriental idea, that of the realms of light and of darkness.

### §3. Cosmopolis

At this point the divergence of the Stoic doctrine from the Hellenic attitude, and also from the attitude of Alexander, becomes most distinct. Alexander's *homonoia* is an extension of the Hellenic idea, destined to include the barbarians and to weld the two people into one. The Stoic community idea is not one of active creation; the Stoic need not pray for *homonoia* because *homonoia* exists already, although only between the worthy wise men, while the political *homonoia* of the people is of no interest. The cosmopolis need not be created; it has only to be seen by the wise who are already its members. The Stoic idea, therefore, did not contribute much to the Hellenistic theory of kingship; no king could be of help in the creation of the Stoic world community. Its importance lay in the long-range effectiveness of the discovery of the human soul and its experience of solitude, thereby preparing the way for the Christian upheaval.

### §4. The Evolution of Moral Personality

If the idea did little for the creation of institutions, its contribution to their maintenance is nevertheless highly important. Although in the early period of Zeno the Cynic radical apolitism and destruction of values made themselves felt, the philosopher seems to have changed in his later life toward an acceptance of the political structures as they stand. He seems to have evolved a theodicy, similar to that of Leibnitz, that this world, though full of evil, is in accordance with divine providence and is the best possible world. The wise man has, therefore, to cooperate in the social and political relations, even though his cooperation is definitely limited by the acknowledgment of purity of intention as the highest good. The puritanical strain mentioned earlier, which became visible with the Cynics, now accentuates itself. Man begins to acquire a moral personality with obligations toward the universal logos superseding



the obligations to the community. Within the limits of virtuous action, as defined through the virtuous intention, the system of virtues and values accepted is roughly [the same as] the Platonic and Aristotelian catalog.

## §5. The Concept of Duty

The new concentration of the moral personality necessitated several corollary concepts that indicate the future trends of ideas. In Platonic and Aristotelian ethics the polis was the given framework for human existence, and the discussion of *arete* [virtue] and *eudaimonia* [happiness] could not do more than classify the status of human beings in this settled world. Now, with the realm of social and political relations relegated to second rank, and the personal splinter of the universal logos ■■ the supreme guide of conduct, a category had to be found that expressed the agreement of human behavior with the great harmony of cosmic reason. This concept of the fitness of behavior was named by Zeno *kathekon*. The *kathekonta*, the fit or incumbent acts, are usually translated as "duties." Cicero translated them ■■ *officia*. Through the idea of the "duties" in harmony with nature/logos, it became possible to link the otherwise anarchic existence of the wise man to the action required by political institutions.

## §6. The Solitude of the Emperor

But this activist element, which made Stoicism so eminently acceptable to the best Roman minds, should not make us forget the lack of constructive community spirit. The wise man is thrown into this world with his lonely personal logos; he discharges himself of the duties imposed by divine providence, but he is not bound to his community by his heart and his imagination. The Stoic ideas can hardly be overrated in their importance for the transformation of men's souls, for the preparation of the moral and religious personality that was fit to embrace Christianity, and as a guide to a dignified life in ■ period of disintegration. But they ■■ are not ideas constituting ■ community. Perhaps we can best sense the peculiar flavor of Stoicism in the attitude of the Stoic who lived at the apex of political power, the Emperor Marcus Aurelius. In a passage of his soliloquies he exhorts himself not to attribute too much importance

to life; whether your life be short or long, death cannot make you lose more than the fleeting present; the past and the future cannot be lost because we do not have them (II.14). In another passage he ridicules the attempt to find peace through retirement to solitude by the sea or in the mountains; this he considers a vulgar fantasy, the only effective retreat possible being the retreat into the intimacy of the soul—if it is a well-ordered soul (IV.3). The world is ashes for this soul without past or future; this soul has no myth of history to drive it and no creative dream to tempt it. In time and space it is concentrated in a pointlike existence, moving on under the guidance of the precepts that the emperor evolves in a discourse with himself.

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## Hellenistic Kingship

Stoicism, as we have seen, had no immediate effect on the evocation of political communities in the centuries following Alexander. As far as the politics of the time were concerned, it could do no more than counsel the men of affairs, above all the kings, on how to shape their personal conduct so as to make it that of a wise man and a citizen of the world. The substance of political reality had to come from elsewhere.

### §I. Hellenism—The Problem of the "Dark Ages"

It is unfortunate that the processes of institutional creation in the third and second centuries B.C., and the wealth of ideas involved, are, in spite of the grandiose work of the historians of the last decades [before 1950], not yet fully known and understood as they should be. The reasons for this obscurity can bear a short comment because they will give at the same time as much of an introduction to the Hellenistic problem as the space of this study permits. The outstanding cause of the obscurity is the Renaissance pattern of history; it places western Europe at the beginning of secularization and the rise of the national states as the focus point of history. It then works from this center down to the present on the one side, while it prefixes the classic Hellenic and Roman periods on the other side. The category of the Dark Ages is more than a label for the centuries between the fall of the Roman empire and the Renaissance; it signifies the general unwillingness to approach any period that does not run true to the type of an established political society evolving in the direction of a constitutional democracy. In this sense there is more than one dark age; the category applies to

any period that either precedes the beginning of the internal struggle for power or follows the time when the fight for constitutional liberties has worn down the substance of the community to a state of mass society. The Hellenistic centuries are a preeminently dark age because, seen from the Hellenic past, the polis had reached the phase of the metropolitan rabble, while, looking toward the future, the spiritual anxiety of men in search of a new soul and a cosmion gave rise to the phenomenon of god-kings.

## §2. Divine Kingship

The controversy concerning the "real" meaning of the new creation of god-kings—whether the worship was sincere or just flattery, whether the kings believed themselves to be gods or asserted their divinity for political purposes only, etc.—will probably be solved one day in the acknowledgment that the divergent opinions can be supported by equally good evidence and that curious elements enter into the composition of a god. A king may find recognition of his divinity because of a sincere religious belief on the part of the subjects, or because the subjects have reached a degree of irreligiousness where they do not care if somebody calls himself a god. Poets and philosophers, too, always, may have their share in producing the evocative symbols, whether they quite believe what they say or not. It is one of the most tempting games of a rich soul to conjure from its depths symbols and images that the waking moral personality would rather reject. We have seen the revealing case of Callisthenes.

In the controversy about the more Hellenic or the more Oriental origin of the cult of the ruler, again both sides are right as far as their evidence goes. There is no doubt about the theopoetic faculties of the Greeks before Alexander; hence the creation of new gods should cause no surprise. On the other hand, there is no doubt that Hellas did not produce god-kings before her contact with the Orient began. It seems, however, that in the search for the Hellenic or Oriental origins of the god-kings the possibility is somewhat neglected that a new phenomenon—neither Hellenic nor Oriental—may have appeared on the scene of history, a possibility frequently overlooked by historians who wish to explain the present out of the past and are unwilling to admit that any present may produce a madness and a glory of its own. It may be helpful, therefore, to stress a few

basic facts. First, the Diadochic kings [the successors of Alexander] are neither Hellenic nor Oriental; they are Macedonian. Second, it is good to note that, while heroizations [according outstanding individuals the cult honors due to a hero, thus treating them as superhuman though not as divine] were an ordinary event in Hellas and divine honors had been accorded to a living person once or twice, the first case of a king claiming divinity for himself in his lifetime is that of Ptolemy II of Egypt, who instituted a cult for himself and his sister/wife, Arsinoe, in 270 B.C. Third, it is equally important to note that the cult of the Ptolemies was not the cult of the pharaohs, but a cult of its own; the pharaonic cult went on side by side with the new Ptolemaic institution. And, finally, we should be aware that ruler worship, while followed in Syria, did not take hold in Macedon herself.

### §3. The Animated Law—Plato and Aristotle

Although the god-kings were a new institution, the need that they satisfied was of long standing. The tragedy of Socrates and the post-Socratic theory revealed that a renewal of the political cosmion could no longer come from the people. Plato devoted his attention to the problem of finding the man who would combine power with spirit in order to become the savior of Hellas. The conquest of Alexander transferred the problem to the larger stage of the Greco-Oriental Mediterranean but did not alter it fundamentally. On the contrary, the Greek and Macedonian diaspora in the wake of his campaigns and the upheaval in Asia had resulted in the kingdoms of Alexander's successors in highly mixed populations differing widely ethnically and civilizationally. And, if a renewal of Hellas was impossible on the basis of the disintegrated polis population, the creation of national polities was an outright impossibility under Asiatic conditions. Political organization could not have a popular foundation for many centuries, but had to proceed from the rulers and dynasties. The new political theory deals, therefore, not with the people and its constitution, but with the king and his function of rulership.

The general background is furnished by Plato and Aristotle. This point should be stressed because, under the prevalent misinterpretation of the two philosophers as rationalizers of the polis, it is overlooked that their problem is the agony of the polis and that

their work, through aiming at a regeneration, makes visible the alternatives to constitutional government. For Plato we can refer back to our analysis and simply recall the mystical chain reaching from the polis pattern laid up in Heaven via the philosopher-savior, who through communication with the divine idea has filled his soul with its essence and become the polis incarnate, down to the people whom he has to assimilate to his spiritual substance and to transform into the earthly membership of the polis.<sup>1</sup> The philosopher-savior is the living *nomos* [law] of the future polis and thereby becomes its founder. From this Platonic doctrine stems in essence the Hellenistic theory of the king as the *nomos empsychos*, the living or animated law, producing the political cosmion out of the powers of his divine personality.

The remarks of Aristotle require a brief comment. In his discussion of claims to rulership he considers the possibility that one man in a community could be so superior in virtue to all the others that it would be unjust to submit him to the constitutional rule of law. "Such a one may truly be deemed a God among men" (*Pol.* 1284 a, 10 f.). The art of legislation is concerned only with men who are equal in birth and capacity; for men of preeminent virtue there is no law—"they are themselves a law" (line 13 f.). These phrases could be interpreted as a flattening out and a refusal of the Platonic position. But somewhat later, in the discussion of the forms of government, he reverts to the question under another aspect. He speaks of a people that by its nature is capable of producing a race superior in virtue; if a family of such superiority should exist it would by nature be the royal family and furnish the kings of the nation (*Pol.* 1288 a, 8 ff.). Professor Goodenough has made the excellent suggestion that this passage contains a reference to Persian institutions,<sup>2</sup> where, indeed, as we have seen, the "preeminent family" of the Achaemenians exerted the royal function. And he refers particularly to the emanation of divine power from Ahuramazda to the king, and to the analogous case of Ikhnaton. I think we may go beyond these cautious suggestions and assume that a diffusion of ideas had taken place in the whole region, though its ways are obscure and probably will remain so, and

1. [Compare "Plato's Egyptian Myth," *Journal of Politics* 9 (1947): 307-24; *Order and History*, vol. III, *Plato and Aristotle* (Baton Rouge, 1957), 88 and passim.]

2. Erwin R. Goodenough, *Hellenistic Kingship*, Yale Classical Studies, vol. 1 (New Haven, 1928), 78.

that the Oriental ideas were known to the Hellenic and Hellenistic philosophers, or at least knowable if they wished to use them. There are Babylonian influences in Heraclitus, Persian in the later Plato and the early Aristotle, and there is no good reason to believe that the sun symbolism in Plato's philosophy is not of Oriental origin. There is a latent body of Orientalism in Greece that comes to the surface and forms into a new system now that the time is propitious.

#### §4. Diotogenes

The term *nomos empsychos*, which covers the central topic of Hellenistic political ideas, is not to be found in either Plato or Aristotle, but the meaning is present. It seems to be a Pythagorean concept, for it appears in the fragments of Diogenes, a supposed Pythagorean. Diotogenes gives the most precise formula of the new approach:

The king bears the same relation to the polis as God to the world; and the polis is in the same ratio to the world as the king is to God. For the state, made as it is by a harmonizing together of many different elements, is an imitation of the order and harmony of the world, while the king who has an absolute rulership, and is himself Animate Law (*nomos empsychos*), had been metamorphosed into a deity among men.<sup>3</sup>

Only in a very few instances in the history of political ideas is the brevity of this formula equaled or surpassed. It is the succinct statement of the parallel between the universe and the state, between the cosmos and the cosmion, between God and the king. And the dryness should not let us forget its supreme realism under the new historical conditions. Such order as was possible for mankind in turmoil could come only from the power of the ruler as the harmonizer of the people, as foreseen in Alexander's prayer at Opis; and this situation remained the same for more than a millennium of imperial order.

#### §5. Ecphantus

All the other ideas contained in Hellenistic fragments on kingship are elaborations of this formula of Diotogenes. Another fragment

3. Cf. *ibid.*, 68.

from Diotogenes stresses the harmonizing and cathartic function of the king with respect to his subjects. The king has to draw himself up to the gods in his conduct, and when thus he achieves true majesty he will be able to put into order those who look upon him. "For to look upon the good king ought to affect the souls of those who see him no less than a flute or harmony."<sup>4</sup> A fragment from Ecphantus elaborates the parallelism of this royal function with that of God, "for the king had the same love and communion with his subjects as God has with the universe and the things in it."<sup>5</sup>

Another passage from Ecphantus merits consideration because it shows the blending of Stoicism into the other materials. The passage reminds us that we have left the sphere of the Hellenic polis community as well as that of the Oriental nations, and that rulership is exerted over a heterogeneous mass of men who have to work out their salvation individually. The Diadochic kings were not national rulers as were the Macedonians before Alexander, but they were elevated to rulership by personal fortune in a disordered world. Their personal problem is not different from that of any of their subjects, and this personal problem has found in the Stoa the expression foreshadowed in Aristotle. The concept of *autarky* [self-sufficiency] is now definitely narrowed down to the individual human being; if he wishes to lead the perfect life in imitation of divine existence he has to be self-sufficient for himself alone. Different men, however, are differently capable of realizing this aim, and the king is the man who is supremely capable of reaching it and thus to become the living pattern after which the rest of mankind can model their lives. Hence, the open cosmopolis, the anarchic community of the wise men, acquires an internal structure that does not leave the single human beings to themselves, but gives them assistance in their endeavor through the guidance of the king. On the king rests the duty to make himself as self-sufficient and godlike as possible, for only then will he be capable "of putting this good into human nature so that by imitation of him, their Better, they will follow in the way they should go." "His logos, if it is accepted, strengthens those who have been corrupted by evil nurture as if by drink, and who have fallen into forgetfulness; it heals the sick, drives out their forgetfulness which has settled upon them as a result of their

4. Ibid., 72.

5. Ibid., 84.



sin, and makes memory live in this place, from which so-called obedience springs."<sup>6</sup>

## §6. The Savior Kings

This passage proves the continuity of problems between the age of Plato and the later periods. The *nosos*, the disease of the mind about which Plato complained, was too deep to be cured even by his powerful soul; his savior function had to be continued through centuries. And in the light of the Ecphantus fragments we understand the meaning of the royal titles of the Hellenistic period, of *soter* (savior), *euergetes* (benefactor), *epiphanes* (the god-apparent)—until "the Logos was made flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). And, finally, the last quoted fragment outlines the future idea of the political status ■ an essentially imperfect one that in slow progress will give way to the perfect community without application of force. The passage of Ecphantus—"Oh, that it were possible to put from human nature all need for obedience!"—contains the problem of an evolution from the external legality of action to a state of things where human beings act as they should out of morality of motive—the problem that has found its classic formula through Kant.

6. Ibid., 89.

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## Israel

### §I. The Place of Israel in History

The treatment that should be accorded to Israelitic political thought, and its place in a general history of political ideas, is to a degree a matter of discretion because so many roads meet here and depart again that every solution will for good reasons be found unsatisfactory in many respects. The history of Israel is contemporary with that of Mesopotamia, Persia, and Egypt, and it might be argued that the ideas produced in this area and period belong properly to the ancient Orient. But the very existence of the imperial centers in the Nile and Euphrates valleys reduces the history of Israel and its ideas to that of a minor power, exposed to the influences from the surrounding great civilizations and exerting no visible influence itself. Israelitic ideas, important as they are if taken absolutely, are an irrelevant episode in the ancient Oriental history that is characterized by its great cosmologically founded imperial structures. The importance of Israel for the world outside its own borders begins at a time when Israel had ceased to exist and the ethnic remnants of the people, with much foreign admixture, had been reorganized by Ezra's synecism of Jerusalem, after the Babylonian exile, into the Jewish church. In the Hellenistic period that we have under observation the Jews were still practically unknown. The expedition of Antiochus Epiphanes—aimed at subduing them because their religious difference made them a nuisance in the Seleucid empire—was the first occasion on which they were seriously noted. Their world importance came at the end of the period with the appearance of Jesus, the Messiah, and with the incorporation of the Jewish canon, of which the most important part is the pre-exilic Israelitic literature, into the sacred books of the Christian

community. While these events fix the main line of interest for us, we must not overlook the other great currents of the Jewish history of ideas: the literature of the Hellenized Jews (partly present in the canon) with its great independent influence on the early church fathers; the line of influence that goes into Islam; and finally the Talmudic Jewish history that frequently touches the mainstream of Western history (most importantly in the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance). At present we shall confine ourselves to a selection of those elements that culminate in the appearance of the Savior, and to that body of doctrine which through its religious sanction has influenced profoundly our modern political thought.<sup>1</sup>

## §2. The Concept of the Covenant

The principal political concept of the Israelites is the *berith*, variously translated in the Bible as "covenant" or "league."<sup>2</sup> The *berith* is a general category used also in private relations where the most adequate rendering would be that of "contract," but it acquires historical importance in specifically political relations. *Berith* can have the following meanings: it can mean a confederacy of men, or families, or tribes into a larger political unit, sanctioned religiously; it can mean the confederation between social units and at the same time a covenant between the new unit and God as its head; or it can have the same meaning with a king as the head of the confederacy; and finally it can mean any agreement between lesser units for military purposes, or for the grant of pasture and water-hole rights, etc. The great instances of the *berith* are, of course, the *berith* between Yahweh and the Israelites on Mount Sinai (Exod. 19:3-6), and the *berith* between Israel and David when he was chosen king (2 Sam. 5:3). The instances reveal important differences with Hellenic civilization in the political atmosphere, and correspondingly in the field of ideas. From the Greek polis we have inherited our ideas about the internal organization of a political community, about

1. The interpretation of Israelitic problems follows in the main line Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*, vol. 3, *Das antike Judentum* (Tübingen, 1921). For the history of the period and bibliography see the articles by S. A. Cook in *CAH*, vol. 1, 2d ed. (1924), chap. 5; vol. 2 (1924), chap. 14; vol. 3 (1925), chaps. 17-20; vol. 6 (1927), chap. 7; furthermore the article by R. H. Kenneth, "Israel," in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (New York, 1913-1927).

2. [Compare *Order and History*, vol. 1, *Israel and Revelation* (Baton Rouge, 1956), Introduction.]

constitutional government, and about what we may call secondary democracy. Here we are faced with a phenomenon that, in order to distinguish it from the Hellenic, we may call primary democracy. By secondary democracy we mean the increasing participation in government of sections of the population that formerly were denied such participation. By primary democracy we mean the original creation of a people as a community of free householders. The history of Israel does not present throughout a free community of this type. But it stands at the beginning as the reality of the Israelitic confederation, and its idea remains active to the end as a regulative principle of community life.

### §3. Primary and Secondary Democracy

The element of primary democracy recurs, if not in the same classic purity as in Israel, at least as a strain in political life at later periods, as in the Swiss confederation, in Geneva and Zurich and in New England, with similar religious implications; and it recurs as an idea in the contract theories that aim at the constitution of a people, from Hobbes to Rousseau. There has been much controversy over whether the contract theory, for instance of Rousseau, meant to refer to a real event in an early phase of human civilization, or whether it was meant as an idea regulating the institutions of a given historic society. We may achieve a better understanding in this and similar cases if we understand them as the latent effectiveness of the *berith*-idea, which has come into the Western world through Israel. The case is, however, usually not quite clear in modern societies, because the historical setting of the Western national states is not that of an original federation, but of a dynastically created territorial and popular unit with an aristocratic ruling class. When the contract theories begin to exert their influence they carry, therefore, the momentum of the Israelitic and Christian past, but they are at the same time in the service of the secondary democratic idea of a fight for constitutional rights against the upper class in the established community. We notice, therefore, in modern political ideas the curious oscillation of the democratic idea between liberal and collectivist tendencies. The liberal tendency is due to the necessity of the fight against the established pattern of institutions and the claim for privileges equal to those enjoyed by the ruling class; the collectivist or even totalitarian tendency is

due to the revolutionary will to establish the predominance of the rising group in its standards of conduct to the exclusion of others, i.e., to establish it as the new people. In Israel we do not find this ambivalence of attitude similar to that of Milton or the French Revolution, because the idea of the *berith* was never in doubt. The prophetic literature, in spite of its storming against the kings, contains, therefore, nothing that smacks of social reform or social revolution. In their ethics the prophets are essentially conservatives and do not deviate by an iota from the sacerdotal law collections. The revolution against the Torah—"It is written, but I say . . ."—comes only with Jesus.

#### §4. The Covenant as the Source of National Personality

The history of the actual covenants in Israel is rather obscure. To constitute a community as a religious order under the leadership of Yahweh seems to have been a device followed more than once in an environment of nomads where the tribal and clan organizations were in flux. The religious order was apparently the type of organization that under the circumstances had the best chances of political and military survival through its superior cohesive force. Besides the Israelitic federation proper there may have existed others; it is probable that Judah was a Yahwistic federation, and the same holds true for the order of the Rechabites. What emerges into the light of theoretical literature as the main line of Israelitic political construction is the great *berith* of Sinai that constitutes the people under Yahweh. In the sacerdotal report the creation of kingship is construed unfavorably as a violation of the *berith* with God. But the language of the Davidic *berith* is particularly revealing for the meaning of the event in general. In 2 Sam. 5:1 (and 1 Chron. 11:1) Israel gathers and speaks to David, "Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh," and he, having been the war leader before, shall now be the ruler. The organic symbolism indicates the idea of the mystical body that is created through the choice of a head for the bone and the flesh. The *berith*, instituting a king, is the act that creates the permanent historical personality of the people. It is an act similar in its meaning to the choice of a king by the migrating Germanic tribes, and similar to the function of the kingmaking contract in the theory of Hobbes.

## §5. The Rise of Royalty and the Prophets

The great break in Israelitic history is marked by the transition from the Yahwistic to the royal *berith*. The formation of the Israelitic confederation fell in the period of diminishing power of the surrounding empires in the thirteenth century, and it ends with the increasing pressure of Philistines (Pelesati), Egyptians, and Assyrians since the tenth century. The defense against the threatening annihilation required a military and political organization that could not be produced by peasant and nomad tribes under charismatic war princes. The account in Samuel, with the cry of the people for a king "like the other nations," is clear in its implications, and the consequence was the creation of a monarchy that soon became centralized in cities, similar in their structure to the Hellenic polis, with the wealthy classes as the bearers of the costly military equipment of horses and war chariots. The surrounding countryside developed similarly to the Greek, with increasing indebtedness and impoverishment of the peasantry and mountaineers. In this situation of increasing danger from the powerful neighboring empires, and of a highly unsatisfactory domestic evolution leading to violations of the social code of the primitive confederation in the relations between the poor and the rich, appear the prophets. The prophetic activity is mainly a prophecy of disaster. The chief lines of attack are the foreign policy of the kings, the influx and revival of non-Yahwistic cults, and the violation of the social law. In all these respects prophecy is determined strictly by the Yahwistic religiousness and develops its categories in the framework of the *berith* idea.

## §6. The Law

The *berith* is a covenant between Yahweh and Israel: the people promises to obey the law of Yahweh, and Yahweh promises to make Israel the holy nation and to prefer her above all other peoples. The two great topics of Israelitic political speculation are, therefore, the mutual promises: the law that has to be obeyed by the people, the glorious destiny that has to be granted by Yahweh.

The law, as to its content, is largely influenced by the ideas of the Mesopotamian welfare state, and this general tendency is accentuated by its being the law of a confederation of free men.

Of the provisions that later became important, those should be mentioned above all that tend to protect the poor members of the community, and in particular the supreme command: "Save when there shall be no poor among you!" (Deut. 15:4). The fraternal community spirit expresses itself in a long list of laws, protecting the debtor and the poor against oppression and destitution. The importance of these laws hinges not upon the question of whether they were actually observed—as a matter of fact they were frequently broken—but on their regulative effect as commands of the Lord, sanctioned by the punishment of Yahweh in case of violation. They are in the idea not man-made law, but positive divine law. Their character of divine law had a far-reaching consequence in later history because as divine law the Israelitic social codes were received by the Christian community, and Christianity was thereby saved from becoming just one of many similar Hellenistic mystery cults. Possessing the complete Israelitic law was the most important asset of the Church when it had to face the task of ordering social life in the Roman empire. The divine positive law has remained a major problem in the Christian theory of law, and it forms, for instance, a subdivision of the law in the theory of Saint Thomas Aquinas. The Israelitic attitude is, furthermore, still effective in the policy of the modern national states through the idea, not always rationalized and expressly formulated, that no member of the political community, however insignificant his status, can fall wholly outside the community. The poor man, as such, has preserved his status as a type in the community order throughout the Christian Middle Ages (where he actually had a definite rank, as evidenced by woodcut representations of estates, showing the pope and the emperor at the head and including the poor as a distinct estate) into the present social relief measures. Our modern, so-called progressive social legislation is the not-all-too-perfect, late fulfillment of ideas that have come to us, through the mediation of the Israelitic codes, from the measures for social protection, pensions for war widows, etc., of the Mesopotamian bureaucratic empires.

## §7. Rationality of Conduct—Puritanism

The divine partner to the *berith* was a warlord, a god of history leading his people in person to supreme victory, and he was an exclusive

god. Of the numerous practical implications of this theological position, we can touch upon only a few that have left lasting traces in history. The most important is, perhaps, the rationalism of social conduct, which is less a positive quality than a trait that emerges in the absence of other religious experiences. The great fundamental experience is the *faith* in the exclusive God whose assistance can be secured through the strict observation of his commands, and whose wrath will be incurred by a violation. As the confederation is a community of freemen, this means that every single member is responsible for his conduct, not only to himself, but also to the whole community, which has to pay collectively for the offense given by any member. The consequence is a careful supervision of personal conduct, preferably through priest-experts, who, by way of confession, try to find out whether any offense has been committed. The detailed provisions of the law are probably due to its development as a rational catalog of possible sins, used by the priests in questioning the confessing member of the community. The community interest in the details of personal conduct, producing a consciously rational puritan attitude, reappears in history in frequent, already mentioned instances of religious reformations in Switzerland, Holland, England, and New England. The social type developed under such discipline is what Max Weber has called the *ideal plebeian*. It is distinctly not an aristocratic ideal, nor does it satisfy the religious sentiment of the "mass" or the "people," which always needs genuinely magic relief from the oppressive reality of everyday existence and [seeks] personal salvation. This mass religiousness that we find in Hellas in the mysteries, in Egypt in the Osiris cult, is connected, however, with the orgiastic, vegetative, and chthonic divinities. As this whole section of religious life was in conflict with the exclusiveness of the war god, we find in Israel neither the individual religiousness of the mysteries nor the cosmological speculations in politics.

## §8. The Evolution of Eschatological Sentiment

In the period of the monarchy and the prophets, this exclusiveness becomes the starting point for the internalization and spiritualization of Yahwism. We saw that the *berith* with the war god originated in the period of relative weakness of the great empires. With their regeneration, the Israelitic confederation of free peasants



and nomad warriors was unable to survive, and the institution of the monarchy with a military, fiscal, and administrative apparatus, borrowing heavily from Egypt and Babylon, became a necessity. The people fell apart into the urbanized royal organization and the poor demilitarized peasantry. With this development, Yahwism became increasingly the religion of the pacific countryside, preserving, however, the traditions and formulas of the war religion. The contrast begins to make itself felt between the idea of a warrior community aspiring to supreme victory over other peoples and the social and political reality that became ever darker and ended in national disaster. Through the phases, first of resentment, protest, and revolt against the royal establishment and its policy, later of submissiveness and pacifism in foreign policy, and finally of the glorification of the innocent sufferer, Yahwism develops into ideas and symbols that come so close to the later Christian ideas and symbols that they can scarcely be distinguished. The ideal is preserved, however, that through successive phases after many a disaster, because of the castigation by Yahweh of his people, the "Day" will come when Israel is not only restored to its old glory but will be ultimately victorious over all enemies. This idea of history as a period of trial culminating in the glory of real history has remained alive, although profoundly changed over long periods, and reappears in our time in its more primitive form as one element in the political Communist and National Socialist theories of an ultimate phase of history that will see the glory of a chosen group over the dark, inimical powers.

The eschatology of the prophets reflects this process of spiritualization. An early prophet like Amos imagines the end as a peasant's paradise (Amos 9:11-15); but even a late prophet like Trito-Isaiah revels in a massive materialism reminiscent of the story, current in Germany in 1919, of the lady who meets her charwoman in the revolutionary days and is informed by her about the new gospel: "Now we shall soon be equal: I shall sit in the parlor, and you will wash down the stairs" (Isa. 61:5-6). But the great line of evolution culminates in Ezekiel (36:26-27) and particularly in Jeremiah (31:31-34) with the promise of a new *berith* that on the "Day" will be written in the hearts and thus will not need to be taught because everybody "from the least of them unto the greatest of them" will know the Lord. The idea of the new *berith* concurs in this development with the Ecphantus fragments of the Hellenistic period and their distinction between obedience according to the law

and according to free morality under the cathartic influence of the royal person.

We have spoken of the spiritualization of the eschatology and even used the term *evolution* to indicate the transition from the massive warrior ideal to the law living in the heart. While this process actually took place and approached the Israelitic internal development so closely to the Hellenistic that the fusion in Christianity became possible, we must not overlook the fact that the older, massive ideal persists in the literature into the exilic and postexilic time, side by side with the new idea. On this point Israelitic history differs fundamentally from the Hellenic. The polis idea is concentrated for the last time in the grandiose flare of the Platonic soul, and then ends abruptly; out of the disintegration rises a shadow of the cosmopolis, gradually filling with lifeblood in the following centuries. In the sentiments underlying Israelitic political thought, the two trends—the faith in the victorious community and the negation of the community as ultimately defeated and dissolved—do not separate, but enter into a unique blend. To understand the phenomenon fully, let us recall the elements of the situation. There is the original war confederation living in the expectation of ultimate victory under divine leadership. In eschatology, this phase expresses itself in the belief that the “Day” will bring some catastrophic event, through the intervention of Yahweh himself. God is the Redeemer of his people and does not use a human instrument for his ends. With the institution of kingship, a new symbol becomes visible; the ultimate victory may be brought about by a kinglike personality, possibly of Davidic origin. And at the same time, there is present the resentment against the kingship—the violation of the original *berith*, and the “Day” is marked by the appearance of a leader riding on an ass as did the charismatic war leaders of the pre-royal time (Deborah song, Judg. 5:10). Both personal ideas, the descent from David and that of the leader on the ass, later appear in the history of Jesus. The exilic eschatology oscillates between the two ideas of the people themselves as the actor on the “Day” and of a personal leader—the saving figure.

### §9. Deutero-Isaiah—The Suffering Servant of the Lord

Under the surface of these images now develops the profound confusion of eschatological sentiment. The original idea of the ultimate

victory produces a theodicy under which the setbacks and disasters of Israel are understood as signs of divine disfavor caused by violation of the *berith*. Other nations and their glory are instruments in the hands of Yahweh to test and to punish Israel. With the cumulation of disasters, it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain this position, because questions arise concerning the intentions of Yahweh in giving world domination to the Mesopotamian empire and humiliating Israel to the present degree. Obviously, the sinfulness of Israel, however great it may be, is not greater than that of other nations, and, furthermore, what can be the meaning of being God's chosen people if the result of the choice is endless abasement. At this juncture, we have to accept ■ a fact of history beyond further explanation the tenacity of the faith in Yahweh: The one way out of the problem, the way of Hellas, the spiritual disintegration and reorientation of life, is not taken. In spite of tendencies toward an evolution of personality and the dissolution into personal problems, the collectivist spirit of the warrior confederation predominates, and, out of the immense faith and the equally profound despair, emerges one of the greatest creations of mankind: the Suffering Servant of the Lord.

The songs of the Suffering Servant are contained in Isaiah 40–55. Their author, referred to as Deutero-Isaiah, is an unknown exilic prophet. The interpretations of the servant vary. Some scholars assume that he is a personification of Israel; others believe that he is a personal savior. There is sufficient evidence for both opinions and, therefore, also for the third—that the suspense between the two meanings was intended by the author. I believe that we come nearer to the problem if we do not attempt to understand the figure as a rational construction corresponding to intentions of the prophet, but if we see it, in the light of the previous remarks, as the uncertainly trembling and again fanatically determined ecstatic image arising out of the delirium of faith and despair. The songs of the Suffering Servant receive their atmosphere from the simultaneous presence of all the contradictory elements that have entered into the eschatological sentiment in the course of its history. The grossly materialistic victory is there, as well as the new *berith* of Jeremiah, the pre-monarchic people as well as the royal savior.

The figure of the servant shifts, indeed, between the suffering Israel that will be redeemed by the Lord and a soteriological personality that will be used by Yahweh ■ his instrument of redemption; between Israel as an object of redemption and Israel herself used

as an instrument by Yahweh for the redemption of the world. The person of God shifts between the old partner of the great *berith* who will ultimately subject the world to his chosen people and a world God who uses the suffering of Israel as a means for the redemption of all the nations, the meaning of the choice lying precisely in the redeeming of suffering. These conflicting aspects of figure blend into one another. Nevertheless, one idea emerges clearly, which has no parallel in any other civilization: the idea that the world will be saved through the suffering of an innocent, guiltless servant. It is obvious that this idea implies the decisive step toward an individualization of sin and responsibility. The original confederation idea is impermeable to any thought of its kind, because it is understood that the community will suffer as a collectivity for the offense of any one of its members—those who have no guilt together with the guilty, among those living at the time and into the third and fourth generation. The solidarity in suffering raises no problem since the individual personal substance does not yet exist; the single human being is nothing if not a member of the chosen people. This seems to be the profound reason for the surface confusion of images and ideas in Deutero-Isaiah; the discovery of the individual sufferer is made by way of the collective suffering of Israel as an individual among other nations. As far as it is possible to transpose the intricate logic of sentiments into a rational medium, the internal sequence of the idea would be the following: first the suffering of Israel becomes inexplicable as a temporary punishment inflicted through the instrument of foreign nations, because the success of others far outweighs the punishment of Israel; unless, therefore, the idea of the chosen people should be abandoned, the suffering must have a meaning independent of the sins of Israel. For these sins, compared with those of other nations, would not justify the disproportionate suffering. This deeper meaning of suffering without guilt makes sense, however, only in a world plan in which the suffering becomes the means of redemption for the whole world. Under these conditions the faith can be maintained, the suffering can become bearable, and the identity of the people, which is dependent on the *berith*, can be preserved with the utmost tenacity. But let us hasten to restate that Deutero-Isaiah is not a rational treatise; it is a kaleidoscopic series of images expressive of a soul in travail. Only in this medium where the images of Israelitic eschatology float in a dream are the shifting accents possible that

let the guiltless sufferer appear once as the people and then again as the savior person. "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." "He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter." This servant of the Lord is hard, for the Lord God will help him: "Therefore shall I not be confounded; therefore have I set my face like a flint." And finally: "He has poured out his soul unto death; and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."

### §10. The Suffering Servant and Christ

The symbol of the Suffering Servant in Deutero-Isaiah is still deeply embedded in the particular Israelitic experiences and sorrows. But the image of the future Savior appears lucidly before the background of anguish, and the Christology of the New Testament has made ample use of the servant. Psalm 22, which is infused with the spirit of Deutero-Isaiah, opens with the words: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" These are the words of the dying Savior on the cross. If the report is historically correct, these words would not be, as frequently interpreted, an utterance of ultimate despair, but, as a quotation from Psalm 22, they would be a self-interpretation and identification with the symbol of the Suffering Servant, implying the prophecy with which the Psalm ends:

They shall come and reveal his righteousness to a people that shall be born because he has done this.



## The Destiny of Empire—Daniel and Polybius

Five generations had to pass after Alexander before men realized the extent of the catastrophe. By the middle of the second century B.C., a new experience made itself felt and produced new categories that from that period on have remained part of our heritage of political ideas. The Oriental speculation was deeply embedded in the cosmological view of the place of human society in the universe. Greek political theory could rely upon the framework of the polis and had the Homeric epic as the grandiose backdrop of history. The *omphaloi* of the respective civilizations were each the center of a world, and all political events and problems were fitted into the mythical system. This old world was now breaking up: the great antagonists of history, Greeks and Persians, dissolving into political insignificance; the ephemeral conquests of Alexander divided among his successors; the Diadochic empires in permanent strife; and in the West the new power of Rome gaining imperial stature after the battle of Zama (202 B.C.). The internal structure of a political unit, the great theme of Greek thought, receded to the second plane, while the rise and fall of empires became the new fascinating topic. Politics was no longer seen as the internal affair of an unquestioned community, but as movement of power structures on a world scale expressed by the new categories of the vicissitudes of history and of fortune. The imperial organizations and the men dominating them had lost what roots they had in the life of a people; power became a game in the abstract to be played by professionals, while millions of people could do nothing but bow and dodge in order to escape the worst blows of the storm raging over them.

## §1. The Categories of Empire

We have to grasp this fundamental event of the dissociation of the power structure from the people thoroughly, in order to understand the atmosphere of the concepts evolving in the next centuries. As long as a political organization is the living form of a people, there are definite limits to expansion because an indiscriminate extension of empire over other peoples has internal transformations as an inevitable consequence. Only when the disintegration of the people has reached a certain degree, as it did in the eastern Mediterranean of the Hellenistic period, can the power apparatus be cut loose from its popular basis and expand indefinitely; so long, that is, as the military and administrative organization holds together. In the second century B.C., the point had been reached where the limits of expansion of the Mediterranean powers were no longer determined by their popular basis, but increasingly by the strength of the opposing powers. The first idea that emerged in this new situation was the *orbis terrarum*, the geographic expanse of the Mediterranean coast with its back country, which was the field of the contending powers and potentially the area of domination for the survivor. That the *orbis terrarum* became the power field means that the policy of the several powers was influenced by any event within this vast geographic expanse. The Persian empire of the fourth century was still no problem for Roman politics; the Seleucid empire in the period of Antiochus the Great had become one, because it could become potentially the master of the *orbis terrarum*. The second idea is that of the *imperium* itself, the potential power that would extend over the *orbis terrarum* and its disintegrated population. The third is the idea of order created by the potential empire, which culminated in the idea of the *pax romana*, the peace imposed with an iron hand on a territory and population that otherwise would be a seething chaos of warfare between minor military gang leaders, living on such spoils as could be extorted from a helpless population. The fourth idea, finally, is that of the man who through the strength of his personality can master the unholy forces set free and weld them into a working organization of empire, the idea named after the man who first fulfilled the function: Caesar.

## §2. Daniel—The Sequence of Empires

Those who were on the receiving end of the events saw the new

order earlier than the conquerors. The first great expression of the destiny hovering over the empires is the Book of Daniel. The anonymous author was a Jewish pamphleteer in the time of the Maccabean war (the book is to be dated ca. 166 B.C.). His apocalyptic spirit and his experience of history created the famous dream of Nebuchadnezzar, forgotten by the king and then revealed and interpreted by the prophet. The king dreamed of a great image: "his head was of finest gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay" (Dan. 2:32-33). "And a great stone smote the image, and became a mountain and filled the whole earth" (2:35). The image is interpreted as the series of the four empires (Babylon, Media, Persia, Greece [the Greek-speaking empire of Alexander and his successors]) that in the end will be supplanted by the kingdom of God filling the whole earth (2:36-37; 8:19-21). The myth of the metal ages appears in a new transformation; the ages are not phases of the anthropogenic process, but are marked by the concrete empires of the Jewish historical experience. The general pattern of Jewish eschatology, the period of trial and ultimate victory, is retained, but history itself is divided now in periods. The periodization of history as a sequence of great empires appears as a new idea; the pattern could be dissociated from the specific empires intended by the author of Daniel, and it proved adaptable to the empire speculation of the later Roman period.

### §3. The Experience of Fortune

The periodization of Daniel is given with monumental grimness; the author does not introduce into his fateful sequence any analysis of underlying causes. The sentimental and intellectual clarification is due to Polybius and his *Histories*.<sup>1</sup> Polybius deals with the portentous period of history from 220 to 168 B.C., which established Rome as the inevitably victorious power in the imperial struggle. With him, fortune is the principal category governing the destiny of empires; fortune under two aspects: subjectively, as the sentiment by which the actors of the struggle react toward the historical events; objectively, as the force determining the shape of history. In

1. Polybius, *The Histories*, 6 vols., Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1922-1927). On Polybius see T. R. Glover, *Polybius*, CAH, vol. 4 (1930), chap. 1.



the first meaning, fortune indicates the nihilistic state of mind of the conqueror who, in the hour of victory, is overcome by a certain horror that what happened to his enemy may another day happen to himself. The fight is a struggle for domination; while within the polis the leaders of the opposing parties were still convinced of their legitimate purposes, now victory is accompanied by the chilling feeling that no higher principle could be thrown in the scales for one side or the other. For every single one of the great junctures in the struggle for empire Polybius takes particular pains to make the point clear. On the occasion of the Macedonian victory over Persia, he lets Demetrius of Phalerum reflect on Fortune, who never compacts with life; "who always defeats our reckoning by some novel stroke"; who never can be trusted and gives victory only to take it away at a later time (XXIX.21). After [the battle of] Pydna (168 B.C.), when Macedon fell to Rome, Aemilius Paullus appears as the speaker who reminds the senate: "It is chiefly at those moments when we ourselves or our country are most successful that we should reflect on the opposite extremity of fortune" (XXIX.20). And at the conquest of Carthage when the city is aflame he lets Scipio Aemilianus turn around and grasp his hand in sudden fear: "A glorious moment, Polybius; but I have a dread foreboding that some day the same doom will be pronounced upon my own country" (XXXVII.20).

#### §4. Fatality and Authority of Empire

In this first meaning, the sentiment of fortune is aroused indiscriminately by each of the imperial victories, and the rise of Rome would be but another link in the chain. The greatness of Polybius now, which gives him his place in the history of ideas, is his supreme understanding of facts and factors; it enabled him to see the shape that fortune was to impose ultimately on the Mediterranean power field. With him begins the view of world events that endows the Roman *imperium* with the aura of fatality, with that atmosphere of being willed by destiny as the final order of a troubled mankind, with that inevitability permitting of no alternative solution, that the name of Rome stands in the Western world not for a nation among dozens of others, but for the idea of the organization of mankind as such. To be the heir of Rome has remained the supreme authorization of European governments for more than a millennium; and the line of

tradition was kept up through the time of the national states, with diminishing prestige, until 1806. Even then, the idea was not dead, but the Holy Roman Empire gave way to rival imperialisms drawing in their turn part of their authority from the Roman survivals. The great symbols of Rome and of Charlemagne were active in the Napoleonic idea of the emperor; the central European core of empire split up in a section under the imperial dynasty in the Austrian empire, and the northern German empire under Prussian hegemony. The imperial idea was also extended to the colonial empires: the crowning event of the nineteenth-century British imperialism was the acquisition of the title of emperor of India for the crown of England; the same period saw the American emperors [of Mexico and Brazil]; and recently, in the Italian expansion, the king of Italy assumed the title of emperor of Abyssinia. In eastern Europe, the Russian empire continued the idea of the eastern Roman empire, and still, during the world war, the king of Bulgaria toyed for a while with the idea of assuming the title of Symeon II, taking up the idea of Symeon I, the emperor of the Romans and the Bulgars in 925 A.D. Another line of the heritage goes into the Catholic Church, and the phrase *the power of Rome* has retained the mystic ring of the great foundation.

## §5. The Idea of World History

The finality of the *imperium* is the topic of Polybius, causing him to develop new categories of historiography. He sets his own work apart from that of all preceding historians as giving not the story of a particular series of events, of a war, or of a number of campaigns, or of a single people like the Greeks or the Persians, but as giving for the first time a world history with a view to the "whole" in the mold of which fortune is shaping particular events. Herodotean history was a continuation of the mythical conflict between Asia and Europe; Thucydidean history gave an internal phase of Greek history in the past tense; Polybian history describes a world in the making and tries to predict the future on the basis of past experience. This new "method" is conditioned, of course, by the materials under observation. The Thucydidean century did not permit of fitting the struggle between Athenians and Lacedaemonians into a worldwide frame of reference, because there simply was no world in the making. But now the disintegration of the

Mediterranean had assumed a rapidity, and had reached a phase, where it became evident to an intelligent and detached observer that this was a time of transition to a new power pattern. Every great battle was now a fateful step bringing the end nearer: Zama (202) disposed of Carthage and freed the hands of Rome to turn to Greece; Pydna (168) disposed of Macedon and Greece and opened the way to the eastern Mediterranean. The *orbis terrarum* was, looking at its past, the wreckage of a world in which Carthage, Rome, Egypt, the Greek poleis, Persia, and Babylon had lived side by side; it now had become, as far as ethnically based political communities were concerned, a vast power vacuum with an irresistible suction for whatever power apparatus that happened to be the strongest.

## §6. Cycles

The problem of Polybius is in some respects comparable to that of Spengler. Both lived in periods of their respective civilizations where the exhaustion of the old substance had become obvious, and the "transvaluation of values," to use Nietzsche's term, had become the paramount problem of the time. The important difference in their relative positions seems to be that Polybius ~~was~~ writing in a later phase of disintegration, when the main decisions had already occurred. We have not seen yet our Zama and our Pydna. Spengler, on the other hand, in spite of his earlier position, was nonetheless able to outline the future possibilities much more effectively because he disposed of immensely richer historical material for his type study—and above all because he had Polybius as his predecessor. History does not repeat itself exactly, but there are certain sequences of internal development that furnished for Polybius and Spengler alike the basis of judgment concerning the point of evolution at which each had arrived in his time. The sequence is roughly the following: (1) a first phase of heroic monarchy (in the polis) or feudal monarchy (in western Europe) is followed (2) by the beginning consolidation of the political community in estates (after the synecism in Hellas, with the beginning of national monarchies in Europe), (3) a third phase brings war between the estates, ending (4) in the establishment of democracy and the transformation of the estates into parties; (5) party democracy dissolves under the increasing influence of the masses into personal followings under

leaders who contend for the spoils of the state (in Rome, the period of the civil wars and the triumvirates), to be followed (6) finally by the establishment, by one of the leaders, of a new monarchy of the Caesarean type.

### §7. The Tripolity—The Real Causes of Roman Success

Polybius did not yet dispose of the improved conceptual instruments that we have today, and besides his task was complicated because he had to use the same limited instruments in order to explain two phenomena that were in apparent contradiction. The first was the cycle of decay; the second, the resistance of Rome against the general workings of decay. The formal instrument that he had to use in both instances was the classic theory of the forms of government ■■ developed by Plato and Aristotle. The general pattern of decay was rendered through the sequence of the forms of government from monarchy, through aristocracy and democracy and their respective forms of decay with corrupt monarchy closing the cycle. In order to explain why Rome did not follow the general law, or at least not as rapidly ■■ the other poleis, Polybius used the theory of the mixed form of government that, after Plato and Aristotle, had received its final form through Dicaearchus of Messana. Dicaearchus developed, with Sparta ■■ the model, the idea that an ideal resistant form of government would be the well-balanced mixture of the three forms, the "tripolity," in which the decay of every single element would be checked by the countereffect of the other two. Polybius posited that the consuls of the Roman constitution represented the monarchical element, the senate the aristocratic, the tribal assembly the democratic, and that the checks and balances between the three preserved the effectiveness of Rome and thus predestined her to be the victor in the imperial struggle.

This explanation presents us for the first time, in an incipient form, ■ a characteristic of political theory that will become more outspoken with every future century. To label the stages of the internal evolution and the final decay of a political community with the Hellenic names for the forms of government is ■ somewhat schematic approach to the problem that may prevent its understanding rather than further it. The sequence of the forms

of government was developed by Plato with his eye definitely on the phases of the Greek polis, and in their context they were highly realistic. In their application by Polybius to the Romans, we notice a certain conflict with reality. Polybius uses the theory of the tripolity to explain the tardiness of the Roman evolution, though he is perfectly aware that the type of constitution, as far as it is determined by the three elements, is not decisive for the fate of a commonwealth. He recognizes that Sparta was an ideal instance of the mixed form, and admits that this advantage did not help her in the least to obtain a supremacy in Greece because other internal factors which had nothing to do with the three elements operated against it (VI.48-50). And he predicts that the possession of the perfect constitution will not prevent the decay of Rome, again because the constitution is not the important factor, but because victory and new wealth will ruin morale and precipitate the development toward mob rule and leadership. ["Leadership" here means the arbitrary rule of one man emerging from the chaos of mob rule at the end of the cycle.]

As a realistic, scientific description of the reasons for the success of Rome, the sections of the famous book VI which deal with the tripolity are therefore relatively unimportant (VI.3-18). The real causes emerge in the comparative analysis of chapters 43-58. Here we find the principle announced that two things are fundamental in the constitution (*systasis*) of a state; customs and laws (VI.47). If men's private lives are righteous and well ordered, the state will be good; if men are covetous and unjust, the state will be bad (VI.47.2-4). Rome is not better than the other states merely because it possesses a balanced constitution, but rather because an aristocracy with certain standards of conduct guides the affairs of the state. The end of Rome will come when the masses "will no longer consent to obey or even to be the equals of the ruling caste," and the state will become a democracy.

I select only a few of the remarks of Polybius characterizing the Roman aristocracy. Perhaps a rule of conduct should be mentioned first that always makes for worldly progress: the Romans take what they can get and never give anything to anybody if they can help it (XXXI.26.9). He gives, furthermore, an instructive account of the funeral rites (VI.53-54) by which the excellence of the aristocratic leaders of Rome and their ancestors is impressed upon the people, thus strengthening systematically the authority and prestige of the

ruling class. He explains that a surprising degree of honesty in public service distinguishes Rome from Carthage, but that nevertheless ■ deft hand at acquisition of property has endowed Rome with the means for military expansion, which were lacking in Sparta. Furthermore, the Italian policy of confederation and alliance supplies Rome with excellent recruits for the army from the ranks of the peasantry, while Carthage has to rely on mercenary troops. A long section (chaps. 19–42) is devoted to the Roman military system and its advantages. Finally, Polybius stresses the *deisidaimonia* of the people, ■ word the meaning of which stretches from religious-~~ness~~ to superstition as the most important feature of the Roman commonwealth. He discusses the matter as ■■ enlightened Greek. Such religiousness would be an object of reproach among other peoples, he says, but in his opinion it maintains the cohesion of the Roman state (VI.56). The Romans, he thinks, with a sophistic touch, adopted the propagation of religiousness for the sake of the common people. "It is a course which perhaps would not have been necessary had it been possible to form a state composed of wise men, but as every multitude is fickle, full of lawless desires, unreasoned passion, and violent anger, the multitude must be held in by invisible terrors and such like pageantry." In other words: he is aware that Rome has not passed through the Hellenic disintegration of the polis creed that characterizes the Athenian fifth century. The *nosos* about which Plato complains has barely touched the Rome of the second century.

### §8. The "Common Intelligence"—The Hieroglyphic Use of Ideas

Considering this excellent realistic analysis of the causes of Roman success, we have to ask why Polybius introduces the entirely inapposite digression on the mixed form of government. The digression is the first major instance we encounter of the application of a theory, endowed with the prestige of a great name, to materials with which it has little to do. There are elements in the material under observation that superficially do permit of ■■ application so that the procedure does not have the appearance of nonsense, but as soon as the analysis goes deeper the uselessness of the tripolity pattern becomes obvious. The case of Polybius is particularly illuminating, because the same man gives in the same section of his treatise the

competent scientific analysis alongside the vulgarian treatment of the problem using the authoritative pattern [a pattern relying on borrowed authority]. Some of the characteristics of the irrelevant use are given by Polybius himself. He refers at the opening of the tripolity section to Plato as his authority and then continues: "but ~~as~~ the arguments ~~are~~ subtle and are stated at great length, they are beyond the reach of all but a few. I therefore will attempt to give a short survey of the theory, as far ~~as~~ I consider it to apply to the actual history of facts and to appeal to the common intelligence of mankind" (VI.5.2). The "common intelligence," the *koine epinoia* of the many, is set up ~~as~~ the standard for reporting a theory that has its full meaning only in the theoretical argument of the mind that originally envisaged it. With the transposition of a theory from the medium of the primary creative intelligence to the medium of the secondary common intelligence, the meanings of the terms change more or less radically because the common denominator in the transfer will be surface similarities of facts while the essential problems may be perfectly different. This technique of quotation, and of application by transposing an idea from its primary medium to that of ~~a~~ secondary author, we shall call in the context of this study the *hieroglyphic use* or function of ideas. When using an older idea hieroglyphically, the author makes no attempt at ascertaining the original meaning of the language used; he does not retrace the steps that have led to the formulation of an idea, but he takes possession of it on the basis of surface associations and uses it as decoration, lending a bit of the prestige and glory of the great name to his own work.

The tripolity of Polybius is an outstanding example of such hieroglyphic use, and it has a distinguished later history, its most important reappearance being in the eighteenth-century symbolism of government and the subsequent incorporation of the principle in the constitution of the United States. Of the wealth of famous hieroglyphs, I wish to recall for the moment only one that enjoys the particular favor of writers on politics: Aristotle's formula of man ~~as~~ the *zoon politikon*. There is no more dignified way of opening a disquisition on political principles than by quoting Aristotle, the author being happily unaware that Aristotle wished to say that man is an animal that finds its fulfillment in the polis but in no other type of political community, which is the exact opposite of what the modern writer usually wishes to express. The body of

hieroglyphs, still rather small in the time of Polybius, increased rapidly with the accumulation of theoretical work, and we have to follow the problem closely in order to distinguish properly between the original sphere of evocative symbols and theory and the ballast of secondary literature, so dear to "the common intelligence of mankind," growing ever heavier with the centuries.



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Cicero

Cicero is "the common intelligence of mankind" triumphant. His political writings are marvelously clear in their presentation and striking in their formulation, ■■ it befits ■ great orator and trial lawyer. But his clearness is ■ clearness of formula, not of thought; not only is he not an original thinker, but he expressly refuses to be one; going to the bottom of ■ problem is not an occupation for ■ gentleman, active in politics, but the affair of ■ "schoolmaster." His work is entirely devoid of the sublime unclearness of ■ great mind wrestling with his problem, fanatically engaged in his search for the structure of reality, happier to find a problem than to solve one. There are no problems in Cicero; whenever there is one insolent enough to come near the surface, the firm hand of the Roman consul and imperator comes down and bends it under the yoke of his authoritative language. The result is impressive: Cicero is one of the most quotable writers in the whole history of political ideas; he has been quoted extensively by the Latin church fathers, and the quotations have been requoted to ■ degree that the Ciceronian formulas (it would in most cases be too much to call them theories) have become ■ permanent fixture in Western political theory, and have thus obtained an importance that is not always justified by their contents.

### §1. Barbarism and Renaissance

The first point that merits attention is the general hieroglyphic character of the work. Cicero has written two dialogues on politics in imitation of Plato, a *Republic* followed by the *Laws*.<sup>1</sup> The

1. Cicero, *De re publica* and *De legibus*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1928).

*Republic* deals with the ideal state, and Cicero takes care to have the dialogue start on the occasion of a sacred festival just like Plato and to conclude it with the mystical experience of Scipio's dream in parallel with the great myth concluding the *Politeia*. While the *Republic* has a greater number of persons present, with Scipio Aemilianus playing the role of Socrates, the *Laws* imitates Plato by confining the number of participants to three, by having them hold their discourse on a walk on a summer day, and by the personal appearance of Cicero as the main speaker. But here the parallel ends and the hieroglyphic character of surface associations becomes apparent. For Cicero is not Plato; his *Republic* does not create a polis out of the powers of his soul, and his *Laws* marks not a new level of spiritual development, but is simply a second volume dealing with subject matter that was not covered in the first.

The situation is somewhat intricate. The imitation is not a case of cheap rivalry; with all due allowance for Cicero's vanity and self-praise, the attitude of shy admiration of greatness beyond his understanding is obvious. At the same time, a sentiment of defiant pride expresses itself. The person of Scipio Aemilianus, Cicero's double, is chosen as a speaker because he "added the foreign learning which originated with Socrates to the traditional customs of his own country and his ancestors" (*Rep.* III.3). It may be permissible to speak of the first instance of the phenomenon that was to recur frequently later, of a Renaissance. The civilization of the Mediterranean is Greek, and the Romans stand in a relation to this civilization that in some respects is similar to that of the later "barbarians." The Macedonians were in their ruling class so near to the Greeks that the problem could not become quite distinct, but in the case of the Romans we are faced more clearly by an instance of a foreign power merging its political capacity and strength into the body of human civilization represented by the Hellenized Mediterranean, with a pathetic mixture of submission to the Hellenic superiority and of a certain resentment because it is their virility that prevents the superior civilization from being engulfed in a bloody chaos.

## §2. Success

This sentiment seems to be the primary source of Cicero's attitude to politics and theory. A second source we have to see in the narrowness of his personality and the conservatism of a newcomer

in the Roman aristocratic society. His narrowness and conservatism made him misunderstand fundamentally the actual state of Rome. The external success of Rome in the imperial struggle was doubtless conditioned by qualities that distinguished the republic favorably from the conquered rivals. But the fact of the success should not obscure the other fact that the internal phases of Roman evolution are parallel with the Greek, that the republic was in dissolution like any Greek polis, and that only a lucky convergence of ethnical, geographical, civilizational, and historical factors had tipped the scales for the survival of Rome just long enough to carry the state over into the imperial expansion and then keep it going by the organized plunder of the *orbis terrarum*. Cicero was blind to the tragedy around him; his attitude toward the new type of political master ■ personified in Caesar was on the whole negative, though he could not quite escape the fascination of this great personality.

Under these circumstances, the Socratic problem had to remain foreign to his soul. There is ■ spark of understanding for Plato the founder of a new polis. Plato is for him, in spite of his admiration, ■ philosopher who expounded an ideal system of government with little practical success. Cicero's ideal is not ■ philosopher-king but the Roman citizen in office who compels men by authority and state power to follow precepts, "of whose validity philosophers find it hard to convince even ■ few by their admonitions." Those who govern ■ city are preferable even in wisdom to those who are mere experts in public affairs without participation in them (*Rep.* I.2). Rome is successful, and Cicero has no imperial soul. Such mythical forces as ■■ alive in him are those of Rome, the aristocratic republic, and such importance as he has in the history of political ideas is due to the survival of Rome in his soul, which enabled him to fuse the Roman idea into the body of political doctrine of his time.

### §3. The Heritage of Panaetius

This body of political doctrine can be roughly identified with the Stoicism of the second century B.C., of that circle of Greeks and Hellenizing Romans gathering in the houses of Scipio Africanus and later Scipio Aemilianus. Cicero mentions particularly Polybius and Panaetius as his sources, and, as the works of Panaetius are not preserved, Cicero in his turn is an important ■■■■■ for this thinker.

The use he makes of these sources is on the whole hieroglyphic. We know this for certain in the case of Polybius, because we can compare the two authors. The tripolity reappears applied to the interpretation of the Roman constitution, still less precise and realistic than with Polybius, ~~one~~ step further removed from its original meaning.

The case for Panaetius is not quite as clear because the basis for comparison is missing. It requires a more elaborate analysis. It seems that the Stoic idea of the world state, the cosmopolis, has developed by the second century further in the direction of egalitarian ideas. The fundamental metaphysical assumption is still that of the world spirit, the logos (*ratio* in Latin), or *nomos* (*lex* in Latin), setting off sparks—or splitting off fragments—that form the personality centers of men. There is a mutilated passage in Cicero, filled by conjecture in which it seems that the Cynic and early Stoic aristocratic setting apart of the wise man is retained (*Leg.* II.5). But the main trend of doctrine goes toward the assumption of the generic equality of men as a consequence of their equal participation in the divine logos; the universe is a community of God and men (*Leg.* I.7). The cosmopolis, which was not more than a sketchy outline with Diogenes, is now filling up with substance; the formula of Cicero needs only a little shift of accent to produce Saint Augustine's idea of the *civitas Dei*. This trend is still more marked in the *Somnium Scipionis*. The elder Africanus explains to Scipio in his dream that the statesman should not conduct his life with an eye to the criticism of the vulgar mass and to future fame; he should take virtue alone as the measure of his action. To be praised by future generations does not mean much considering that "you ~~are~~ never mentioned by those who lived before you, who were no less numerous and were certainly better men" (*Rep.* VI.21–22). The commonwealth of gods and men is not a community between God and the living generation, but it comprises the diffusion of the divine substance among mankind during the whole *magnus annus*, the world year ending in the general conflagration; it comprises the living and the dead and those who are not yet born; the status of man is determined essentially, not by the repercussions in the tiny fragment of the commonwealth that is occupied by the country and the people into which he happens to be born, but by his status in the great commonwealth, which he owes to his participation

in the substance of God. The main features of the *civitas Dei* are practically complete.

#### §4. Rome, the Cosmopolis

In the preceding paragraph, I have attempted to isolate those elements of Ciceronian thought that are probably Stoic and may go back to Panaetius. The elements of Stoic doctrine are combined, however, with other ideas that hardly would have been those of a second-century Greek, and probably are the Ciceronian contribution proper. We mentioned the conservatism of Cicero and the survival in him of the mythical forces of the republic. Thanks to this survival, Cicero was able to merge the idea of Rome into the idea of the cosmopolis, and thus to bridge with sublime complacency the problems that had been the torment of Greek political theory. The ideal state is no problem for Cicero; he does not have to create it out of his soul; he just has to look around him: Rome is the ideal state; all he has to do is to describe the constitution and the civil and religious law of Rome. The resentment against Greece is rather marked in his attitude. He refuses to invent an ideal state because an invention of this sort is a questionable enterprise, to be indulged in by frivolous Greeks but not by a reputable Roman. He names the Greek reformers and lawgivers, Lycurgus, Solon, Cleisthenes, and adds with pride that "our own commonwealth was based upon the genius, not of one man, but of many; it was founded, not in one generation, but in a long period of several centuries and many ages of men" (*Rep.* II.1). The Greeks had all the emotional instability of a seafaring people; "not only they themselves but also the customs and institutions of their cities can be said to be afloat" (*Rep.* II.4). The seacoast is Greek; the barbarians are living inland; and, with a certain "barbarian" pride, he points to the solid inland foundation of Romulus (*Rep.* II.4). Rome is the ideal materialized; the Stoic problem of making the cosmopolis compatible with the coexistence of a multitude of finite states is solved through the actuality of the ideal Rome, which was founded in such a way "that the polis would one day be the seat and hearthstone of a mighty empire" (II.5). The *imperium Romanum* has grown into the cosmopolis; the Stoic idea that man has two fatherlands, that of his birth and the city of the world, has evolved into the formula that man has two fatherlands, the countryside of his birth and Rome (*Leg.* II.2).

## §5. The Myth of Government

The fusion of Rome with the idea of the world order of mankind may be a modest theoretical achievement, if it is one at all, but it certainly is a factor with which we have to count from now on in the history of ideas. Through the myth of Cicero, Rome has become more than Rome; it has become the political order in the absolute, accepted as it is, as a part of the universe, not to be questioned in its right to existence as a whole, nor in its mode of existence. The people exist, and the government exists; no inquiry into the material or spiritual conditions of the existence of a political community is either desirable or necessary. This myth of the government absolute as a fixture of the cosmos has not found general acceptance in later times; but the transfer of the absoluteness of Roman government to government in general was nevertheless highly successful, and there is a strong tradition up to this day of treating political problems only within the framework of an existent government; the horizon of investigation is hemmed in firmly by the acceptance of the myth of government as it exists. Only during the last two generations have such problems as the emotional and mythical structure of a political community come into the field of political science; and even this statement is an exaggeration, for the treatment of these fundamental problems is carried on by a small number of outstanding scholars, approaching the questions independently, while the standards of the profession as a whole are practically untouched and adhere to the Roman myth.

## §6. The Myth of Law

The myth of government that stems from Rome has taken from the same source its peculiar stock of hieroglyphic formulas. On its way to Cicero, Stoicism has changed from Greek to the language of the Roman republic. The Latin of Cicero is not simply a translation of Greek philosophic terminology, but it changes the meaning of the terms profoundly by introducing into them the connotations of Roman government. The government of Rome is the *res publica*, usually translated as commonwealth, and interpreted by Cicero as the *res populi*, the property of the people. The application of the civil-law concept of *res* to the public institutions has become the

inexhaustible source of speculation on popular sovereignty (*Rep.* I.25). The people, however, is not just any assemblage of men but ■ multitude that gets together through consent to a right order and a partnership of common interest (*Rep.* I.25; III.31). The investigation into politics is cut short; the *vinculum juris*, the bond of right order that constitutes ■ community for Cicero, is in fact the last product of complicated preliminary processes leading up to the mythical evocation of ■ people; for Cicero, it is the beginning and the end of definition. The myth of government takes on the special form of the myth of the law. By making the legal order of the community the structural element of politics beyond which questions are not permitted, Cicero has created the idea of law as ■■ absolute entity that can be treated as an independent object of analysis without reference to the problems of evocation underlying it. The Ciceronian formulas are chiefly responsible for the libraries of lawyers' literature on principles of government. The numerous theories and formulas centering around the idea that law is the basis of political society, and that the true government is possible only by consent of the governed, are Ciceronian hieroglyphs.

The bond of right order, of *ius*, is constituted by nature (*Leg.* I.10). Nature is ■ synonym for God, *logos*, right reason, and *nomos*. At this point, the categories of the Roman republic lead back to the Stoic conceptual apparatus. The Greek *logos* is translated by *recta ratio*, reason having the inner direction that makes it capable of distinguishing between right and wrong; and the Greek *nomos* is translated by *lex*, the law, subtly merging the vast Greek meaning of *nomos* with the rather restricted Roman legalistic law. Cicero's basic definition is therefore: "true law (*vera lex*) is right reason (*recta ratio*) consonant with nature, diffused among all, unchanging and everlasting, which calls to duty by its command, and deters from the wrong by its prohibition" (*Rep.* III.22). It is necessary to follow the ideas in this sequence, because otherwise the shades of meaning would be lost. From the Greek-Stoic ideas of the divine *logos*, whose sparks are diffused into the individual human beings, there is no clear way to the Roman law formulas. But if we start from the fixed elements of Cicero's system, we are able to understand how, through the identification of the Roman *lex* with the Eastern *nomos-logos*, the cosmopolis is linked to Rome, and the empire acquires the metaphysical quality of being the substance of God.

## §7. The End of Cicero

The strange secret of Rome was her power to survive as a shell, in the governmental apparatus as well as in the idea, while her substance disintegrated and disappeared. While Cicero was saving the idea of Rome and laying the foundations of the myth of government and law, the Roman republic gave way to the Caesaristic type of political organization. But among the leaders who organized the disintegrated sources of power into a personal apparatus, there was only one Caesarean; the others were men of more sinister nature. After Caesar's death, Octavian and Marc Antony came to a temporary agreement, which included the mutual surrender of persons who were obnoxious to the respective leaders. Cicero was on Marc Antony's list; Octavian surrendered him. A man whom Cicero had successfully defended in a lawsuit asked for the special favor to massacre him and was granted the privilege.





## The Golden Age

Rome died, and the empire that continued her name was born, in ■ tremendous crisis. The reflection of this crisis in the sphere of ideas is ■ phenomenon so vast that our context does not permit us more than to touch upon some of the more important phases.

### §I. Caesar

The end of the republic is dated by Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon, in the night of January 10–11, 49 B.C. The event and the date have to be mentioned, not as ■ piece of historical information, but because in Caesar's career the man himself and his actions are more than mere facts of history; they are political symbols. Caesar is the only man in the history of mankind whose life fitted so perfectly into the course of events that his deeds and their meaning are not separated by ■ process of reflection; there has developed also a myth of Caesar, but at the beginning stands his person as a myth that has become flesh. The mythical forces of the Platonic soul created a polis in the spirit; the soul of Caesar penetrated into the substance of history itself. The five years from 49 to 44 B.C. have seen the myth of empire and rulership coming to life in action. The crossing of the Rubicon is to this day the symbol of the decision that marks the end and the beginning of an age. And then comes the grandiose, pitiless series of battles tracking down the rival for imperial power in the chase around the Mediterranean: Ilerda in 49, Pharsalus in 48, the death of the Magnus [Pompey] in Egypt in 47, the defeat of the son at Thapsus in Africa in 46, and the final rout of the Pompeians at Munda in Spain in 45, thus closing the circle around the sea. This was no conquest of a dreaming Alexander, tempted by unknown horizons; here was ■ master striding the *orbis terrarum*, taking possession of

the well-known world. While Cicero was priding himself of Rome as the *res publica*, Caesar made the world into his *res privata*. His width of personality was a miracle: He combined the fascinating corruption of an Alcibiades with the solidity of a Roman general, the shabby astuteness of a politician in managing the rabble with a greatness of soul that was the admiration of his contemporaries and caused the foundation of a temple to the clemency of Caesar; he was a strategist and a tactician of the first order and the classic reporter of his own campaigns; he proved himself able to subdue the world, and he began to show his ability to administer it. His one mistake testifies to his greatness and proves that his success was not due to shrewd mediocrity ■ was later that of Octavian: he overrated the quality of his fellowmen. He himself was fully aware of the state of the time and his unique function in it. The matter-of-factness of his commentaries has a touch of irony in showing to an overwhelmed world the technical details out of which an imperial position grows; he knew what his rule meant in terms of order for ■ Rome dissolving in the gang wars of military leaders over which the senate had lost control; but he could not imagine that anybody would, in view of the alternative, be narrow and unwise enough to kill him. He was murdered by his closest associates, by men whom he had made.<sup>1</sup>

The reaction came quickly. His most intimate enemy, Cicero, has given the grudging portrait of his greatness in a speech against Antony: "In him there was a genius, calculation, memory, letters, industry, thought, diligence; he had done in war things, however calamitous to the State, yet at least great; having for many years aimed at a throne, he had by great labor, great dangers, achieved his object; by shows, building, largesses, banquets, he had conciliated the ignorant crowd; his own followers he had bound to him by rewards; his adversaries, by show of clemency; in brief, he had already brought to a free community—partly by fear, partly by endurance—a habit of servitude."<sup>2</sup> Since then, Caesar has remained the living idea of rulership. The Roman emperors and the later great imperial figures of European history, down to Frederick II and Napoleon, stand in the shadow of the perfect master.

1. For the characterization of Caesar ■ Friedrich Gundolf, *Caesar-Geschichte seines Ruhms* (Berlin, 1924).

2. Cicero, *Philippic Orations*, ed. John R. King (Oxford, 1899), II.145.

## §2. The *Monumentum Ancyranum*

In Polybius' description of the Achaean war, we find a revealing passage (XXXVIII.18.8) to the effect that the Achaeans greeted the quick Roman victory with relief as preferable to a long-drawn-out struggle or the machinations of their own leaders. The helpless population of this time, no longer organized in effective political units, had an immense desire for peace even at the price of other less desirable blessings of the *pax romana*. Whoever could establish himself as the final victor would be greeted as a savior, and, if his rule was exacting, it would still be better than the vicissitudes of war. We have to take this attitude into account in order to understand the increasing willingness to see the peace bringer first as an almost and then as a really divine figure, and correspondingly on the part of the victorious leaders the tendency to see themselves as benefactors of mankind. The great document of the beginning imperial age presupposing this situation is the *Monumentum Ancyranum*, in which Augustus enumerates the laudable deeds of his reign: the billions distributed to the Roman plebs and the soldiers, the building enterprises, the gifts to private persons. The emperor could omit, probably in all sincerity, the minor fact that every cent thus spent was robbed, confiscated, extorted from persons killed, blackmailed, left destitute, and driven to suicide. When, after Caesar's death and the short flare of civil war between Octavian and Antony, the temporary agreement between them and Lepidus was reached and the new triumvirate had received legal sanction through an act of the senate (43 B.C.), a golden age seemed to be ahead after the iron age of the struggle between the Caesars.<sup>3</sup>

## §3. The Fourth *Eclogue*—Antony and Cleopatra

The famous first expression of this sentiment is the fourth *Eclogue* of Virgil. The cycle of the ages is closed, and after the iron age a new cycle will now begin with the Saturnian time. A golden race will follow the race of iron, and the bringer will be a child yet unborn. It is uncertain to whom the prophecy refers. W. W. Tarn assumes that the *Eclogue* was written on the occasion of the marriage of Antony with Octavian's sister, and that the bringer of

3. *Monumentum Ancyranum, Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, text and historical commentary by Concetta Barini, with a preface by Ettore Pais (Milan, 1930).

the golden age would be their offspring. But the child was a girl, and Antony fell in love with Cleopatra.<sup>4</sup> The marriage between the two gave rise to a new series of symbols, fusing the Virgilian prophecy with similar predictions in the East and with the idea of divine kingship. The twin children of the pair were called Alexander Helios and Cleopatra Selene. The name of the boy brings together more than one line of myth and prediction. The Alexander part of the name continued the Macedonian tradition with the claim to the empire of Alexander, given substance to a degree by Antony's preparations for the Parthian war, which was meant to bring the Persian realm back into the empire as an inheritance for the son. The Helios part took up the Sibylline prophecy of a rule of Helios preceding the golden age, suggested by the fourth *Eclogue* (5.10); it reflected, furthermore, the pharaonic sun symbolism (Cleopatra, a ruler of Egypt, was the daughter of Re); and finally the name may have been a claim to the Persian-Parthian sun symbolism. The concentration of imperial symbols went one step further on the occasion of the "Armenian" triumph of 34 B.C. The triumph was held in Alexandria, not in Rome, and it was followed by the so-called Donations, an elaborate distribution of titles and territories to Cleopatra and her four children. Cleopatra and her eldest son, Ptolemy Caesar, whom she had from Caesar, were declared queen and king of kings, joint monarchs of Egypt and Cyprus, and overlords over the children and their realms; Alexander Helios received Armenia, Parthia, and Media; Cleopatra Selene, the kingdom of Cyrenaica and Libya; and the youngest, Ptolemy Philadelphos, Syria and Cilicia. Antony remained in the background, being officially

4. I am giving the opinion of Professor Tarn with some reserve. Personally, I am inclined to follow Eduard Norden, *Die Geburt des Kindes, Geschichte einer religiösen Idee*, Studien der Bibliothek Warburg, vol. 3. (Berlin-Leipzig, 1924). Norden suggests that all attempts at finding the child that was envisaged by the *Eclogue* should be given up. Virgil was a man of great religious sensitivity, reacting to the horrors of the civil war and to the experience of the end of a time with the evocation of the new aeon. The symbols employed in the *Eclogue* belong to the Egyptian and Hellenistic stock of images for the soteriological world ruler; see particularly Norden, *Die Geburt des Kindes*, 116 ff., on the parallel between *Eclogue* 4.15-17 and the Egyptian ritual for the enthronement of the pharaoh. The symbol pattern of symbols forms part of the Israelitic tradition and can be discerned in the prophecies of Isaiah and in the narration of the birth of Christ in the Gospels. I have retained, nevertheless, the conjecture of Professor Tarn in the text because Virgil was, after all, not beyond identifying the leader of the golden age with a definite historical personality, as *Aeneid* 6.791 ff. proves. The search for the child is, therefore, perhaps not quite as "amusing" as Norden, *Die Geburt des Kindes*, 12, has it appear.

nothing but a Roman magistrate. His plan is not known for certain, but Tarn assumes plausibly that it could have been only, in due time, the rule over the empire with Cleopatra as Roman empress.<sup>5</sup> As a consequence, the relations to Octavian and the West became critical in 32; the war, conducted by the western provinces officially against Cleopatra, ended in 31 with the battle of Actium. With the consent of Octavian, Cleopatra committed suicide by letting herself be bitten by an asp, the symbol of the Sun God on the crown of Egypt, the God thus preserving his daughter from [the humiliation of being paraded as a captive in] the Roman triumph. In 29, the temple of Janus was closed as a sign that Rome was not at war with any people; this had happened only twice before in the history of Rome.

#### §4. The *Aeneid*—The Victory of Troy

The prophecy of the fourth *Eclogue* had miscarried. After Actium, Virgil announced again the golden age, in the *Aeneid*, this time linking its advent definitely to Rome and the Julian house. The political function of the Virgilian epic, though entirely different from that of the Homeric poems, is intimately connected with it historically. Let us first bring out the fundamental difference. Homer stands at the beginning of Hellenic history, concentrating the Aegean past into the myth of the Greek unity against Asia as a guide for the future. Virgil stands at the end of Roman history, and, if we do not wish to accept the paradox that a people awakens to the consciousness of its national personality at the very moment when it is about to lose it, we have to ask the pertinent question: in what sense can the *Aeneid* be called an epic of the Roman people? The answer is indicated, if we remember the already noted symptoms of the peculiar Roman survival as a power apparatus as well as an idea while the substance of the republic is dissolving. In Virgil and his epic, we are faced by a similar problem.

To determine the precise role of the poet and his work, we have to be aware that the Romans were not a people in the same sense as the Hellenes. Rome was a polis like Athens, Sparta, or Thebes; that she was more successful in organizing the Italian cities

5. W. W. Tarn and M. P. Charlesworth, *The War of the East against the West*, CAH, vol. 10 (1934), chap. 7 and the bibliography in the footnotes to this chapter.

into a working political unit, and even the formal extension of Roman citizenship to the associated and allied Italians, does not, in principle, change her character as a polis and does not make Romans out of the Italians and provincials. Virgil was a provincial, not a Roman; Rome, the polis, meant little to him, if anything at all, and the Roman people as the agent of the republican history has no function whatsoever in his epic. The *Aeneid* is not an epic of Rome, the polis, and her people, but of Rome the instrument of imperial order and of the emperor who wields it; it does not create the myth of a people, but of a savior who brings the golden age of peace. In stressing the non-Roman character of the epic, we must not forget, however, that the idea of victorious Rome survives into the myth of empire, and that the Roman name continues into the Virgilian pacified *orbis terrarum*, just as it continued into the *imperium Romanum*. The complete physical dissolution of Rome into the empire, as to the personnel of the emperors and the army, took another century; at the time of Virgil, the situation was still that of Rome victorious, lording it over the nations: "Thou, O Roman, remember to rule the nations with thy might (*imperium*); and these shall be your arts: to impose the law of peace, to spare the subdued, and to destroy the proud" (VI.352-53).

This new Rome has not preserved much of the Ciceronian Rome whose constitution was the work, not of a man, but of the genius of a people; the pride in the time-resistant "tripolity" lies far back; the destiny of imperial Rome is not determined by her people, but by the Julian house, stemming from Aeneas the Trojan, the son of Venus. The myth of Trojan descent is the main topic of the epic, but it is not an independent element in the mythical texture of Virgil. The myth of the descent had been current in Rome and was, in that sense, available to Virgil; it would have remained an inconsequential antiquarian curiosity if it had not been grafted on the myth of the imperial golden age dawning upon mankind after the victory of Rome over the Hellenized East. It was the genius of Virgil, the great poet, who saw this possibility and understood its full significance. Up to this time, Rome was a power, strong and successful, but barbarian and illegitimate, not on the same civilizational footing as the Hellenic poleis and Hellenistic empires. Through the myth of Trojan descent, Virgil has drawn Rome into the circle of Hellenic myth and thereby legitimated her in the world of her time. The conquest, which hitherto had been due

to incalculable fate, had now received a meaning; the conquest of the East had become the revenge of Troy against the Greeks. The sentiment underlying this twist of the myth is of older standing. We noted in Cicero already the mixture of admiration for the superior Hellenic civilization with barbarian pride and resentment. Through Virgil, this profound resentment found expression in myth, and the immediate success of the poem testifies to the strength of the feeling, and incidentally to the bad conscience of Rome. The price that Rome paid for adding the mythical conquest to the physical was heavy, for, in order to enter the Hellenic glory, the upstart had to surrender the Roman tradition and to deny her obscure origins. Victory thus came very near to the admission of defeat and to a confession of the essential Roman weakness: Rome had not produced a myth of her own; in order to gain mythical status, she had to slip into Greek myth. And somewhere in the background lurks the desire, not quite pleasantly, of personal victory of Virgil over Homer.

## §5. The Myth of Troy with the Gauls and Franks

The myth of Trojan descent found its highest expression in Virgil, but it had a history before and after him, and also a history beyond the Roman borders. Virgil found the myth fully developed in his time. The first attempts at inventing a foundation myth for Rome, fitting her into the Greek system, were naturally made by the Greeks themselves and go back to the fourth century B.C. By the beginning of the third century, the story became important for the first time for Rome as an ideological aid in justifying the war against Pyrrhus, whose family descended, according to its own myth, from Achilles. A generation later, the myth was used as an instrument of diplomacy by the Acarnanians, who required Roman aid against the Aetolians on the ground that they alone of all Greeks had not participated in the war against Troy—the first time that a Greek community made that point.<sup>6</sup> The transfer [of the Trojan myth] to the Julian family seems to have come later; Caesar laid claim to such descent in his funeral speech for the widow of Marius.<sup>7</sup> The myth of Trojan descent or foundation, which is to be found

6. T. R. Glover, *Virgil*, 3d ed. (London, n.d.; 2d ed., 1912), 102.

7. *Ibid.*, 103; Suetonius, *Divus Julius*, 6.

in numerous places between Troy and Rome, has also extended through unknown channels to the North. Gallic tribes claimed descent from the Trojans, and the Haeruli were recognized by the Romans as blood relations together with Ilium and Segesta. From the Gallic tribes, the myth spread to the invading Franks. After the middle of the fifth century A.D., Priam appeared as an early king of the Franks, with the definite year 383 in the *Chronicles of Tiro Prosper*. By the seventh and eighth centuries, the Trojan myth had become firmly established as part of any account of the origin of the Franks, with details of their travel from Troy to the Rhine and of the foundation of a city that occasionally was identified as Xanten. Trojan descent remained part of the French national myth up to the Renaissance.<sup>8</sup>

8. For the Trojan foundation of Segesta, cf. Thucydides VI.2. For the Gallic and Germanic development generally, cf. K. L. Roth, *Die Trojasage der Franken, Germania*, Vierteljahresschrift für Deutsche Altertumskunde, I. Jahrgang (Stuttgart, 1856). For the Frankish myth in its developed form, cf. K. A. Fr. Pertz, *De Cosmographia Ethici Libri Tres* (Berlin, 1853), and the works of Fredegarius: *Gregorii Turonensis Historia Francorum Epitomata per Fredegarium* (Migne, P.L., LXXI, col. 577), and *Fragmenta ex aliis Fredegarii excerptis selecta, quae ad historiam Francorum pertinent* (Migne, P.L., LXXI, col. 697 ff.).



*Part Two*  
*Christianity and Rome*



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## The Rise of Christianity

### §1. The Problem—The Consciousness of Epoch

The Christian apologist Melito of Sardes addresses himself to the emperor Marcus Aurelius in these terms:

Our philosophy first grew up among the barbarians, but its full flower came among your nation in the great reign of your ancestor Augustus, and became ■■■ omen of good to your empire, for from that time the power of the Romans became great and splendid. You are now his happy successor, and shall be so along with your son, if you protect the philosophy which grew up with the empire and began with Augustus.<sup>1</sup>

The passage has in its context no other purpose than that of an argument for toleration of the Christians. I have quoted it because it shows at an early date the existence of the consciousness that Christianity and the Roman empire mark epochs in the history of mankind, that the epochs run parallel, and that in the opinion of Melito the two epoch-making phenomena are interdependent. The actual creation of the epoch and the growing consciousness that it is being created are the aspects under which early Christianity should be treated in a history of political ideas.

We have traced the pre-Christian beginnings of the new consciousness since Socrates. The experience of the dying polis expressed itself in Plato's myth of the soul, in the Cynic transition from the polis to the cosmopolis, in Alexander's vision of the brotherhood of Greeks and barbarians, and in the Stoic cosmopolite speculation. With Polybius, the consciousness of the new epoch began

<sup>1</sup>. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastica Historia*, IV.xxvi.7, trans. Kirsopp Lake, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1926).

to acquire political massiveness through the expansion of Rome to Africa and the East; the idea of destiny and finality in history took shape. With Cicero, the substance of the *imperium Romanum* infiltrated the Stoic cosmopolis; Caesar created in his person the myth of the world ruler; and, in the speculations of Antony and Virgil, the evocation of the golden age under the leadership of a soteriological personality reached its climax.

The Greek and Hellenistic development is paralleled by the internal evolution of Israelitic prophecy down to Deutero-Isaiah and by the subsequent Jewish apocalyptic literature beginning in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes and the Maccabean wars. The prophetic eschatology had culminated in the evocation of the Suffering Servant; the meaning of Israel's suffering was lifted on the world plane as having redeeming function for the other peoples; and the sufferer acquired the traits of a savior. Daniel had introduced, in a parallel with Polybius, the subject matter of world history into the pattern of eschatological expectation. Of the literature after Daniel, I cannot give in this context more than some titles to indicate the continuous stream of preoccupation with the kingdom that will put an end to the present aeon of iniquity: the Book of Enoch,<sup>2</sup> the Book of Jubilees,<sup>3</sup> the Psalms of Solomon,<sup>4</sup> the Assumption of Moses.<sup>5</sup>

At the time of the public appearance of Jesus, the time was certainly "ripe" for something to happen—within Judaea in the atmosphere of eschatological tension, and within the Hellenistic world with its epochal consciousness that neither the decaying local cults nor the machinery of the Roman administration could satisfy as to its spiritual substance. A world empire had come into existence as a power organization, but there was no spiritually coherent people corresponding to the vast organizational range; to be exact: the Roman empire had only a population, it did not have a people. The main function of Christianity, as far as its rise belongs in the history of political evocations, was the creation of a new community substance that would be grafted, with varying degrees

2. The different sections of the collection are placed in the second part of the second century and the first part of the first century B.C.

3. Probably Maccabean period.

4. About the middle of the last century B.C.

5. Placed in the first years of the Christian era. On the apocalypses of this period see E. A. Bean, *The Jews*, CAH, vol. 9 (1932), chap. 9.

of success, first on the population basis of the Roman empire, and later on the tribes of the Great Migration. The tension between the comprehensive community substance with its universalist claim and the natural civilization manifold of peoples coming under its sway gave rise to the great political problems that have agitated Western mankind since the appearance of Christianity: the early problem of national adaptation that led to the split between the Great Church and the eastern churches; the relation between spiritual and temporal power, with the Caesaropapist solution in the East, the Papal solution in the West; the later relations between the church and the state in the period of the formation of the Western nations; our modern tensions between the Christian civilization of the West and new creeds that attempt the evocation of community substances outside the Christian community.

## §2. Jesus

### *a. Insufficiency of Critical Exegesis of the Gospels*

The constitution of the new community begins with the personality, the life, and the work of Jesus. Unfortunately, it is rather difficult to give an adequate account of this all-important phase because the critical exegesis of the sources, particularly of the Synoptic Gospels, is leading ever more to a curious impasse. The latest authoritative study of the life of Jesus, by Guignebert,<sup>6</sup> arrives at the conclusion that Jesus was a Jewish rabbi, a prophet, diverging in his teaching not essentially from the profounder, less legalistic type of Pharisaism as represented by Rabbi Hillel; that the poor, the amharez, were near to his heart, that Jesus announced the coming of the kingdom of God and demanded a radical change of heart in preparation for it, the *metanoia* (just as the Baptist), that his teaching was not very successful in the Galilean country towns, and that in a last desperate effort he made an attempt to teach in Jerusalem, where the Roman police got hold of him as a disturber of the peace and where he met his death rather unexpectedly. According to Guignebert, Jesus did not have any consciousness of being the Messiah, did not designate himself as such, and was not believed to be the Messiah by his disciples. He did not expect his death, and the disciples were in no way prepared for the event: that

6. Ch. Guignebert, *Jésus, L'Évolution de l'Humanité*, vol. 29 (Paris, 1933).

the Last Supper had taken place under circumstances similar to those reported in the Gospel is extremely doubtful; the trial did not imply the charge that he pronounced himself the Messiah. The experience of Jesus as the Messiah did not exist before his death and originates from the visions that the apostles had of the Resurrected.

As a result, the apostles, and particularly Peter, appear as the great religious personalities whose intensity of faith evoked the figure of the Messiah in visions after the death of Jesus. The plain statement of the result arouses grave misgivings as to its correctness, for it remains obscure what in the personality of Jesus should have been the cause for the somewhat surprising effect on the disciples after his life had ended in a black failure. The analysis of Guignebert is impeccable in itself, and I do not see what could very well be opposed to its plausibility, even if other authorities can take exception to an infinity of details with equal plausibility. I have reported, therefore, dutifully, the result of the analysis as the latest stage of science,<sup>7</sup> but I have to draw the conclusion that the methods of critical exegesis of the Gospels are not the methods by which we can approach the personality of Jesus.

### *b. The Nature of the Gospels—"Reflection" of Experiences and Events*

The alternative, however, is not a dogmatic interpretation that would project into the life of Jesus the Christological axioms of the later churches, but ■ treatment of the Gospel sources that is more in keeping with their peculiar nature. The Gospels, and particularly the Gospel according to Saint Mark, which created the type, are admittedly not historical reports but belong to a class of literature that is generally called hagiographic—though it might be more cautious to rank the Gospels as a genus by itself. It does not seem particularly fruitful to treat a source of this type as if it were ■ work by Polybius or Tacitus. The results of such treatment would lie inevitably in the field of historical events: they would concern the life data of Jesus, the historical correctness or incorrectness of a saying, environmental features, influences, etc. They would leave in the dark, ■■ the ■■■■ of Guignebert shows, the most important

7. [See the Editor's Introduction for Voegelin's use of the term *science*.]

problem: the religious personality and its effect on the disciples. I propose, therefore, to start from the assumption that the Gospel of the Markian type reflects the personality of Jesus, his life and work, though the details may be historically incorrect. We may agree that every single miracle report is untrustworthy and still understand the report as a whole as substantially reflecting the healing work of the Savior; we may agree that the parables and dialogue scenes have little chance of reporting correctly the pronouncements of Jesus and still be sure that he expressed himself in parables in general and that the parables as reported reflect essential features of his teaching; we may doubt the report on the baptism by John and still be sure that at some point in his life the experience must have occurred that started him on his life; and we may doubt the report on the temptation and still assume the existence of the problem of temptation in his life.<sup>8</sup>

The most important question finally, the question of the self-consciousness of Jesus as the Messiah, should be treated according to the same principles. I cannot see much sense in treating the Gospel text as if it were a stenographic report of events and sayings and to draw from the obvious contradictions concerning the point the conclusion that only one version can be the correct one. We remember the "confusion of sentiments" in Deutero-Isaiah and the impossibility of deciding which of the conflicting images was "really" meant by the unknown author. We have no source that would give us access to the personality of Jesus comparable to the access we have to the religious experiences of the exilic prophet. But Deutero-Isaiah should make us aware that the workings of the Jewish prophetic soul do not submit to the exigencies of the scientific treatise; it borders sometimes on the comic to see a distinguished scholar pointing the revolver of logical consistency at the Gospel and demanding that the author make up his mind whether Jesus has said that he was the Messiah or not. The Deutero-Isaiah case

8. As to the manner of composition of the Gospel, the passage of Papias (ca. 135 A.D.) gives a plausible idea: "Mark became Peter's interpreter and wrote accurately all that he remembered, not, indeed, in order of the things done or said by the Lord. For he had not heard the Lord, nor had he followed him, but later on, when I said, followed Peter, who used to give teaching as necessity demanded, but not making, as it were, an arrangement of the Lord's oracles, so that Mark did nothing wrong in thus writing down single points as he remembered them. For to nothing he gave attention, to leave out nothing of what he had heard and to make no false statements in them" (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastica Historia*, III.xxiv.15).

suggests the possibility that the acts and sayings of Jesus originated in a similar tension of the soul and created an impression on the disciples that, through manifold transformations, is reflected in the contradictions of the Gospel.

A satisfactory foundation of the principles suggested, and their application to the Gospel texts, would require a[n entire] volume. I refer in this study only to a few points that are apt to characterize the community as constituted by Jesus.

### *c. The Mana of Jesus—The Metanoia of the Believer*

The first point concerns the idea of the personality of Christ, and of its community-creating power, which precedes the Pauline theology. The idea appears most clearly in Mark (ca. 65 A.D.); the other Synoptic Gospels tend to gloss over some of the decisive features. In Mark 5:25–35, Jesus heals the woman with the hemorrhage. The woman touches his garment in the crowd and is healed; Jesus turns around to see who had touched him because he felt "that virtue had gone out of him." The historicity of the incident is irrelevant; what matters is the conception of the healing process. Jesus is possessed of a *mana* (Gk. *dynamis*; in the English translations rendered by *virtue* or *power*) that he can communicate to other persons and that can start various processes in them, usually healing processes. The healing *mana* is not used by Jesus at will; its effectiveness is confined to persons who have faith (Gk. *pistis*) in him. The casuistic details are important. The *mana* has to be met by faith in order to be effective; can, however, a person compel a healing through faith without the consent of Jesus? The question is delicate because the later necessity of sacramental reception into the community hinges on it. In the case in question, the woman was able by force of faith to tap the *mana* of Jesus without his knowing and conscious willing, but otherwise there is no indication that magic compulsion on the part of the faithful was possible. Magic compulsion was also excluded on the part of Jesus. The *metanoia*, the turning, the healing, the state of faith, had to spring from the soul forces of the individual; there is no sign that Jesus ever attempted to heal or convert persons who did not respond to his call. The narrative of the Temptation indicates that the attempt at magic miracle working was a possibility in his soul, but a possibility that was definitely rejected. Several passages refer even to the reluctance



of Jesus to perform faith healings because they would be taken as "signs," or outward inducements to believe in him, while the *metanoia* should be operated through the free transformation of the soul without "proofs." In the Gospel conception of the *mana* and the faith, there is already distinctly preformed the later Pauline doctrine of faith, which "does not mean intellectual acceptance of a creed or proposition, but loyalty, love, and devotion, something like what in Indian religion is known as *bhakti*."<sup>9</sup> The limits of the *mana* become clear from the experience in his hometown (Mark 6:1-6), where Jesus has no power to do any mighty work because his family and his neighbors see him as the ordinary man whom they knew as a child. The biographical knowledge of the person prevents the experience of the *mana*.<sup>10</sup> The *mana* of Jesus and the faith of the believer are corresponding personality elements that can communicate with each other and thus constitute a kind of community substance. This interaction between Jesus and the faithful is the closest we can come through our sources to the constitution of the Christian community as a divine and at the same time historically active substance. The *mana* conception of the community between Jesus and the believers is the basis of the later Pauline interpretation of the community as the body and the spirit of Christ.

#### *d. Physiological and Spiritual Spheres Not Separated—Thaumaturgic Kingship*

In the *mana*, there is no clear distinction between a physiological and a properly spiritual sphere. In Mark 16:17-18, the characteristics of the believer are enumerated as follows: "In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and the sick shall recover"—sin, possession by demons, and physiological diseases for a series of

9. B. H. Streeter, *The Rise of Christianity*, CAH, vol. 11 (1936), chap. 7.

10. The scene is worth closer attention. I can only remark in passing that the materials of the life of Jesus, as incorporated in the Gospel, come from persons who were sensitive to the *mana* of Jesus and who had for this reason not the attitude of a biographer who treats his subject with skeptical detachment. The fact alone should preclude use of the Gospel sources as a historical narrative. Elements of a biographical nature that have entered the Gospel have in any case passed through the atmosphere of *mana* and faith.

afflictions that shade off into one another. Later Christian doctrine has separated the spheres, but elements of the fusion of the healing power with other charismatic powers have retained their political importance up to modern times in the powers of the thaumaturgic kings of England and France. Throughout the Middle Ages, kings had the power to heal certain diseases, particularly scrofula. Even in the eighteenth century, Samuel Johnson ~~was~~ brought as a child to the king to be healed of his disease. The French kings retained their healing power up to the Revolution of 1789; Charles X tried to renew the function in 1824, but his attempts at healing were ineffective. The end of the royal healing power is perhaps more significant of the end of sacred kingship in Western civilization than the rise of democratic and republican ideas.

*e. Social Characteristics of the Community—The Poor and the Rich*

The second point of relevance for political theory concerns the social characteristics of the men who are most likely to enter the new community as members. The main source for the understanding of the question are the two great sermons, the Sermon in the Plain in Luke 6:17-49 and the Sermon on the Mount in Matt. 5-7. They draw clearly on the same group of *logia*, but the selection and editing work brings out different aspects of the question. The Sermon in the Plain stresses more the preference for the poor over the rich ("Blessed be ye poor"); the Sermon on the Mount spiritualizes the characteristics ("Blessed are the poor in the spirit"). The differences in the two sets of Beatitudes should, however, not be overrated. It would be arbitrary to assume that the version of Luke is the original and that it proves that Jesus ~~was~~ a social revolutionary who wanted to attack the rich, whereas the text of Matthew puts a ~~new~~ interpretation on the original sayings. The problem lies elsewhere. The question of property and wealth is not considered a social problem at all, but a personal one. The possession of wealth is a personal obstacle for the rich man to achieve complete *metanoia*. The entanglement in the manifold interests of the world that goes with riches makes it more difficult to turn the heart to the point where the insight into what is right, and the desire to do it, determines the conduct of life and directs it toward the impending kingdom of Heaven. The kingdom that is not of this world is

more easily accessible to those whose stake in the world is small anyway.

*f. A Parallel—The "Proletarian" in the Early Writings of Marx*

The idea of the Gospel may become clearer when we compare it with a modern political theory that assumes a similar fundamental attitude. Karl Marx has, in his early writings, developed a theory of the proletarian that resembles in some respects the Gospel's idea of the peculiar advantages of the poor over the rich in the constitution of the future community. The proletarian is, according to Marx, a person who stands outside bourgeois society, the key to which is property, because he has no property of his own. The proletariat is "a class, which is not a class" properly speaking because it is not integrated into the hierarchy of privileges; the proletariat has no privileges within bourgeois society. In the proletariat, bourgeois society has reached its own negation. "If the proletariat announces the dissolution of the present world order, it only makes public the mystery of its own existence which is the actual dissolution of this world order." The eschatological outlook is very similar to that of the Gospel. There is "the present world order," the aeon of iniquity and misery; this order is bound to be replaced soon by a new one; the symptom of the dissolution of the old and the coming of the new order is the growth of a people which is not of "this world," but actually belongs already to the new one. Actual membership in a new world is the "mystery" of the proletarians; they are the vanguard of the new realm and acquire this distinction through "the universal character of their suffering." The proletarians are not underprivileged; their misery cannot be remedied by conferring "privileges"; their situation places them outside any possible reform of the present order. The complete destruction of the present order is the precondition of "the complete recuperation of human status." The "recuperation of human status" has to be brought about by the "emancipation" from the present order; the "emancipation" of Marx is the category that corresponds to the *metanoia* of the Gospel.<sup>11</sup>

11. Karl Marx, *Zur Kritik der Hegel'schen Rechtsphilosophie*, Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher, 1843/44, reprinted in Karl Marx, *Der Historische Materialismus*,

### *g. Attitude toward Wealth and Property*

The general structure of the eschatological myth of Marx, thus, is the same ■ that of the Gospel. They differ, however, in content. The Marxian eschatology deals, indeed, with a social order; the social order has to be changed, and the social characteristics of the proletariat are the basis for the eschatological expectation. The Gospel deals with an event in the divine world order; the qualification of persons for membership in the kingdom is incidental to the essential question of ■ transformation of the soul. The kingdom of the Gospel will be free of earthly affliction (work, sex, death), and it is "at hand"—it is expected within the generation of the living and may come any day. Property questions are, therefore, of no importance in the teaching of Jesus. In the early Christian community there is no objection to the rich man as such, though it is expected of him as ■ symptom of his sincere *metanoia* that he will part with his wealth and share it with his brethren as it is of no earthly use to him anyway. It is, therefore, strictly impossible to derive any "communitistic" ideas from the Gospel, if communism is understood as ■ form of property arrangement for a social order of duration; the early Christian "communism" is ■■ eschatological phenomenon, not a program for social reform. Typical of the attitude toward property is the story related in Luke's second volume, Acts (5:1-11). A couple, Ananias and Sapphira, sell their possessions and bring the money to the apostles for community use, but withhold part of it. The apostle rebukes them: their possessions were their own and nobody wanted them; when they had sold them, the money was their own, and still nobody wanted it; but when they brought the money to the apostles under the pretense that it was the whole of their earthly possessions, then they had sinned unpardonably: "Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." They both fall dead.

### *h. Eschatological Hardness of Jesus*

While the eschatological character of the Gospel is incompatible with any idea of social or economic reorganization of society, ■ hostile attitude against members of the upper class can still be

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*Die Frühschriften*, ed. S. Landshut and J. P. Meyer (Leipzig, 1932), 1:278 ff. Introduction to *Contributions to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Laws*, in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works* (Moscow and New York, 1975), 3:175-87, 184.

felt. One would expect on the face of it that the difficulties of the rich man in arriving at *metanoia* would make him an object of particular attention and leniency, perhaps even of pity. No such considerations are discernible. The reason lies obviously in the intensity of the eschatological sentiment. Before the magnitude of the impending event, the finer points of everyday ethics become insignificant; the call goes right to the spiritual core in man; no extenuating circumstances are admitted. "I am come to set fire on the earth. . . . Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division. . . . The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father" (Luke 12:49 ff.) Love is the law of the new community, but not much love is lost on the hardened who will not turn.<sup>12</sup>

### *i. Misunderstanding of the Preference for the Poor*

The eschatological attitude of Jesus leaves no room for the distinction between wealth and poverty, except as an obstacle or aid to the *metanoia*, but we may safely assume that the audience did not always understand him in this sense and would be more inclined to see a merit in poverty and such and a taint in wealth. The all-too-human motives were not absent either: we can gather from the remarks of Saint Paul that from the beginning there must have been individuals who thought it an excellent idea to combine the *metanoia* with loafing and to live on the means that were furnished to the community of believers by ladies of substance who had an important role in the economic maintenance of the group of the first disciples as well as in early Christianity generally. The stern rule of Saint Paul—"He who does not work, shall not eat" (2 Thess. 3:10)—seems to have been necessary. The misunderstanding or abuse on the part of the believers was certainly aided by the profound compassion of Jesus. The Gospel is a gospel to the "poor" (Luke 4:18); the diseased and afflicted are admitted with priority to the presence of Jesus, and his compassion moves him again and again to work healings, though he has misgivings about these healings being misunderstood as "signs." The Sermon in the Plain shows a strong tendency to see the blessings of the heavenly

12. This eschatological hardness of Jesus is perfectly compatible, however, with the rules for the members of the community: "Love your enemy," etc.

kingdom as rewards and consolations for those who have suffered more than their due share in this world. If we may doubt that this was the authentic meaning of Jesus, at least it was a meaning in which his words could be understood by the multitude.

*j. Eschatological Hardness of the Believers—The Saints*

The transition from the pure eschatological sentiment to the sentiments of compassion with the poor and of indifference or aversion against the rich, and back to an eschatological hardness, not of Jesus toward the unbelieving, but of the believers against the unbelievers, is of fundamental importance for the understanding of later political movements in the West. There is nothing in Hellenic antiquity that can be compared to these peculiar phenomena. Throughout the Middle Ages and up to our present, we meet with a sequence of movements that revive the eschatological spirit of the early Christian community. The members of the movements either withdraw from the world into smaller communities of "saints," thus, if the movements gather momentum, threatening the civilizational structure that is not based on eschatological expectation but on a compromise with the world; or the saints, expecting an early turning of the tables, become aggressive, particularly when their sentiments are nourished by the more primitive forms of the earlier Israelitic eschatology. The latter type of aggressive eschatological sentiment becomes increasingly important after the Reformation; it reaches its climax in the secularized derivatives of Christian eschatology, in the modern mass movements of Communism and National Socialism. In the aggressive type of eschatological movements, we can distinguish furthermore most clearly the transfer of the eschatological hardness from the Savior, which is essential to his mission, to the believers themselves. Political leaders and their followers assume the savior function and, borne by a sentiment of divine inflation, concentrate the fury of their eschatological hatred against the evil opponent. Eschatological hatred is, since the Reformation, an essential feature in Western political mass movements. It would be, of course, historically incorrect to project these consequences back into the teaching of Jesus. Eschatological hatred on the part of the believer is incompatible with the Gospel of love. The punishment of the sinner and the righting of the wrongs of this world belong, for Jesus, in the province of God, not of men;

but it is probable that inclination of this kind was not quite absent from the hearts of some of even the earliest believers.

*k. The Contrast between the Sermon in the Plain and the Sermon on the Mount*

We have to envisage this possibility if we take the Gospel text as reflecting the movements of early Christian experiences. There is the contrast between the Sermon in the Plain and the Sermon on the Mount to be accounted for. The two Gospels of Luke and Matthew are supposed to be roughly contemporary, independent of one another, but going back to the same stock of source materials. The structure of the two sermons is on the whole the same, though the sermon in Luke is much briefer. But the Sermon on the Mount shows the characteristics that are usually called "spiritualization." A careful analysis in detail (which I cannot give in this context) would show that the "spiritualization" does not impart a new meaning to the sayings, but that Matthew tries elaborately to find formulas that, by their wording, prevent misunderstandings to which the text of Luke might be exposed if it fell into the hands of simple souls. The Beatitudes in Matthew are not followed, as in Luke, by a series of Woes to the rich and saturated, and the Beatitudes are not said simply of the poor and afflicted, but attributed to states of the soul that are supposed to be more readily found in poor than in rich people. The author of the Sermon on the Mount seems to have taken conscious care to preclude aberrations from the eschatological meanings of the sayings to reflections of a social nature.

*l. The Regulative Function of the Sermon on the Mount*

The Sermon on the Mount has become the centerpiece of the teaching of Jesus. The doctrine of the sermon is an eschatological doctrine. It demands a change of heart and imposes rules of conduct that have their meaning for men who live in the daily expectation of the kingdom of Heaven. It is not a doctrine that can be followed by men who live in a less intense environment, who expect to live out their lives and who wish to make the world livable for their families. Following the doctrine of the sermon to the letter would in each individual case inevitably entail social and economic disaster and probably lead to an early death. The pressure

of an eschatological doctrine of this type influences strongly the structure of a civilization. The rules of the sermon are not a code that can be followed like the Ten Commandments. The radicalism of the demands precludes their use as a system of social ethics. Any set of rules that is accepted by a Christian society as the standard of conduct will inevitably fall far short of the teaching of the sermon. As a consequence, social and political life under the sway of Christianity has a considerable elasticity, resulting in a range of political phenomena that we do not find in other civilizations. The tension between the accepted standard and the eschatological sermon serves as a permanent regulative force. Whenever the standard sinks, it can be pulled up again through a reorientation toward the radical demands. Through the political history of Christianity runs wave after wave of *reformations* with the climax in the great Reformation of the sixteenth century. On the other hand, when the swing toward the eschatological demands goes too far, the civilizational structure, which is based on a compromise with the natural gifts of man, is imperiled. We witness, therefore, parallel with the waves of reformation, the series of struggles between the conservative civilizational and the radical anticivilizational forces. The eschatological character of the sermon is a source not only of spiritual and ethical reformation but also of civilizational destruction. In a later chapter, on the People of God, we have to trace the problem in its details.

### *m. Messianic Consciousness*

The crucial question in the life and teaching of Jesus is his consciousness as the Messiah. I have reported the opinion of Guignebert and stated why I did not find it satisfactory. If we take again the Gospels as the reflection of religious processes, it seems clear that the Messiah consciousness did not appear at any definite time in the life of Jesus, but that it was an experience that could become stronger at times, and at times be weakened. We may assume that the preoccupation with his quality as the Messiah was increasing toward the end of his public life when believers more strongly and in greater numbers responded to him as the Messiah; but to the end, to the prayer in Gethsemane ("take away this cup from me; nevertheless not what I will but what thou wilt"), we feel the tension between the messianic and the nonmessianic personality in Jesus:



he, as the man, submits to the possibility of being the Messiah. The great confession on the way to Ceasarea Philippi (Mark 8:27-33 and parallels in Matthew and Luke) indicates the difficulty of the new idea of the Messiah for the disciples and probably for Jesus himself. The traditional Israelitic Messiah was the royal figure who appears on the "Day" and smites the foes of the people of God. This conception of the Messiah was not accepted by Jesus; his teaching had far outgrown the cruder form of the turning of the tables; his realm was not of this world. If he was the Messiah, his fate differed widely from the images of victorious royal glory and resembled rather the Suffering Servant of Isaiah. Even if we assume that the frequent references in the Gospels to prophecies of Isaiah are interpretative afterthoughts, the evolution of the Messiah consciousness of Jesus in the direction of these prophecies is a compelling probability; the Isaiah references, even if not correct as historical reports, "reflect" the evolution of sentiments. That the Messiah consciousness has not been absent is, setting aside the general improbability, guaranteed through the reactions of the believers. In the atmosphere of eschatological tension that the Gospels reflect, it is practically impossible that followers of Jesus should not have believed him to be the Messiah and said so in public. The healing reports (e.g., Mark 3:11-12; 5, 7, etc.) betray clearly that the "possessed," whom we should call today psychologically sensitive persons, had in contact with Jesus the Messiah experience. Nevertheless, the suffering and dying Messiah must have been a great source of bewilderment even to his closest disciples. We can recognize the tension of these bewildering experiences in the desolation of the apostles at the death of Jesus and in the visions of the Resurrected following the death of the Savior.

### §3. The Visional Constitution of the Christian Community

#### *a. Significance of the Visions of the Resurrected*

The visions of the disciples in the days after the death of Jesus are the fundamental evocative acts of the Christian community.<sup>13</sup>

13. [Compare *Order and History*, vol. IV, *The Ecumenic Age*, chap. 5, "The Pauline Vision of the Resurrected," 239-71; "Wisdom and Magic of the Extreme: A Meditation," *Southern Review* 27 (1983): 235-87, now in *The Collected Works of*

Historians of political ideas in many cases do not mention them, believing apparently that the visions belong to the field of "religion" and have nothing to do with "politics." The belief is so pitiful that it is not worth any further argument. The Christian community has been, for the better part of two thousand years, the most important political force of the Western world, and the evocative acts that created it are the basis of all later political evocations that occurred in Western history—as far as it is Christian. To omit the visions of the disciples would be equivalent to an omission of the Declaration of Independence from a history of American political ideas.

In order to understand properly the function of the visions, we have to imagine the main alternatives. If Jesus had been the Messiah according to the older Israelitic tradition, his death would have been the proof of his failure, and the community of his followers would probably have dispersed. If he had been no more than a prophet, he could still have become the founder of a religion of salvation comparable to Buddhism. If his life and death had fallen under the sway of Hellenic or Roman religious forms to a larger extent than it did, he could have become a cult deity. None of these possibilities was realized. There developed, instead, the unique phenomenon of a community under the leadership of a historic personality who at the same time ~~was~~ a manifestation of God, so that the community of believers with the man Jesus could be continued after his death with the living divine personality of Christ. The Spirit of the Resurrected (Gk. *pneuma*) took as the community substance the place of the *mana* (the *dynamis*) of the living Jesus. The precondition for this community of believers with the living God was the visionary conviction of his personal presence.

### *b. Reports and Interpretations of the Visions*

The historical details of the visions ~~are~~ of secondary importance as compared with the phenomenon itself and the interpretation that was put on it by the first Christian generation. The oldest vision report is contained in 1 Cor. 15:3 ff. The Pauline enumeration gives a number of visions that ~~are~~ not reported in the Gospels, and it omits on the other hand the important one of the appearance of Christ on

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Eric Voegelin, vol. 12, *Published Essays, 1966–1985*, ed. Ellis Sandoz (Baton Rouge, 1990), 326–71.]

the way to Emmaus. The tradition obviously was not uniform. This is made even more plausible by the fact that we can distinguish two groups of reports: the **one** group, probably the older tradition, places the first appearances of Christ in Galilee; the other places them in Jerusalem, probably in order to enhance the prestige of that city's community. The interpretation that was put on the visions emerges from the words attributed to the Resurrected. In Matt. 28:19 ff. Jesus parts from the disciples with the command: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations. . . . Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: *and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*" In John 20:29, the crucial question for the coherence of the later community is touched, when Jesus says to the unbelieving Thomas: "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

### *c. The Constitution of the Community through the Descent of the Spirit*

After a series of appearances to individual disciples or smaller groups of disciples, the actual constitution of the new community came about with the Descent of the Spirit on the assembled community on Pentecost day (Acts 2:1 ff.). The event was interpreted by Peter to the witnesses: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs . . . ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain. . . . This Jesus has God raised up, whereof we **are** all witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he has shed forth this, which ye now **see** and hear. . . . Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:22-36).

Jesus, the man, is dead, but Christ lives, and under the guidance of his spirit the community continues to exist as it did when he was present in the flesh. From the context of Acts 2, it is also clear that the community under Christ is still living in eschatological expectation of the early arrival of the day of the Last Judgment. With Paul and his circle begins the transformation of the eschatological community into the Christian community that sees the day in a

remoter future and adjusts itself to the exigencies of existence in this world for the time being.

#### §4. The Pauline Circle

##### *a. The Apocalyptic Idea of the Kingdom of Heaven*

The visions of the Resurrected opened the path for a consequential development of the Christian community idea that can be described technically as the transition from the eschatological to the apocalyptic idea.<sup>14</sup> The eschatological expectation of the kingdom implied that the Messiah would appear at a given point of time in the near future and replace the present world order by the kingdom of God. The apocalyptic idea implies that the Messiah has appeared and that his realm is actually established as the community between him, the Resurrected, and his believers. The new aeon has begun, and in due course the second appearance of Christ will bring the judgment for the sinners. The eschatological sentiment has not disappeared completely by any means, but the apocalyptic sentiment, the belief in the revealed community, is growing and finally overshadowing the expectation of the end in the main line of Christian evolution.

The foundations for the apocalyptic evolution were laid by Saint Paul and his friends. The great speech of Paul before Agrippa and Festus (Acts 26) reports the vision on the way to Damascus that convinced the apostle of the messianic character of Christ and made him understand the significance of the Resurrection. Christ is the first of those whom God has raised from the dead. The Resurrection is the sign of the new aeon; it has the purpose of showing "light unto the people [of Israel], and to the Gentiles" (Acts 26:23) and thus to prepare them for the general resurrection and judgment. The impression on Festus, and on Agrippa and Bernice, must have been strong. Agrippa confesses: "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" (Acts 26:28). The apostle who had appealed to Caesar is sent on to Rome. Acts closes on the triumphant note of the arrival at Rome and the first activities of Paul in the city. Within the same generation of Jesus (Paul is his contemporary), the

14. I am following in this terminology, as well as in the subsequent analysis, the treatise by Alois Dempf, *Sacrum Imperium, Geschichts- und Staatsphilosophie des Mittelalters und der politischen Renaissance* (Munich and Berlin, 1929).

revelation had spread from the Galilean periphery to the center of the Mediterranean world.

### *b. The Epistle to the Hebrews*

#### aa. Theory of the Christian Community

The most intellectual and systematic statement of the new community idea is given in the Epistle to the Hebrews, probably written by Apollos. The language is ecstatic, but a fairly clear set of ideas becomes visible giving the outline of future Christian theory. The great opening confession of chapter 1 takes the revelation as its starting point. God who spoke to the fathers through the prophets has now spoken through the Son. The revelation, however, in order to become effective in the constitution of the community, needs acceptance on the part of man—the topic of chapter 2; the word of God has to be heard and obeyed. By hearing it, men become the “partakers of the heavenly calling” (3:1). Christ has for the community of the “holy brethren” a new sacerdotal and royal function: while Moses was a servant of God, Christ is “the son over his own house,” and “his house **■** we” (3:6). The image of the indwelling of Christ, the priest, in the house of his community receives conceptual precision through the doctrine of faith. “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (11:1); Faith is not a subjective attitude of the individual, a belief, but the community substance itself, created by the appearance of Jesus, “the author and finisher of our faith” (12:2). The awakening of the faith and the consequent partaking of the Holy Ghost are, therefore, not an intellectual process but a transformation of the whole personality, the process by which man is integrated into the community substance. The transformation is described as an “enlightenment,” as a “tasting of the heavenly gift,” and, very characteristically, as a contact with “the powers of the world to come” (*dynamis*). The community is imagined as a field in which “power” circulates; faith is the process through which a man becomes a unit in this field, permeable for the circulating power substance (6:4–5). [This brings to mind] Plato: the beholding of the pattern in Heaven is the mystical process by which the divine substance overflows into the beholder and transforms his soul so that it becomes part of the earthly incarnation of the city that is laid up in Heaven. The “beholding” on the part of the philosopher and the spread of his

realm through Eros are the Hellenic counterparts to the Christian myth of Jesus as the Son of God and the spreading of his realm through faith. The Christian evocation of the realm has essentially the same structure and the evocation as the Platonic realm.

#### bb. The Constitution of the Epochs—The Idea of Divinely Planned World History

The new community between Christ and the faithful is not just any community that now enters the scene of history, but it is the realm of the new epoch. The epochal consciousness is fully developed: the appearance of Christ is the dividing line of world history. The old order gives way to the new: "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second" (10:9). With the change of the priesthood of Moses into that of Christ, the old law changes into the new. The concept of change (Gk. *metathesis*) refers in the context of Hebrews to the epochal change of the order of life, the *taxis*, brought about by the "renovation" of the personality through the faith in Christ. The meaning of the *metathesis* was in later time enlarged to comprise the massive power structure of the community, when the term was no longer applied to the incipient realm of the Christian community but to the Christianized Roman empire. The Latin version of the *metathesis*, the *translatio imperii*, has become a fundamental concept of medieval political speculation, denoting the shift of epochal domination from one great power to another. The idea of the *translatio* is the Christian culmination of the tendencies toward an epochal construction of world history, the beginnings of which we noticed in Daniel and Polybius. The classic ordering principle of history, the metal ages, which was still present in Daniel, is now definitely replaced by the principle of a spiritual evolution of mankind under the providential guidance of God. Insofar as the classic myth, in the Hesiodian form, was less a principle of historical order than an anthropogenic myth, one might say that with the construction of Hebrews the idea of history as such, an ordered process through which mankind is passing, has reached its full development. Polybius has the strong sentiment of history converging toward the final Roman shape, but his idea was still overshadowed by the anxiety that Rome would come to an end, as Hellas and Carthage had perished. History, while tending toward the order of Roman domination, still had no meaning. The idea of

Hebrews envisages the aeon of Christ as the ultimate fulfillment of history and the preceding period as preparation in accordance with the plan of God. The existence of mankind in time has from now on the meaning that we properly call *history* because God is the divine partner of the process that unfolds according to his providence. The epochal consciousness and the new meaning of history expressed themselves in the creation of the Christian era, the dating of events B.C. and A.D. The era is not a [mere] convention of dating, but is determined by the historical appearance of the kingdom of God, of the realm that blossomed out into the *sacrum imperium* of the Middle Ages, and is still with us in the secularized form of our belief in the Western Christian civilization. The transition from the spiritual meaning of the *metathesis* to the fuller conception of *translatio imperii* was aided materially by a passage in Matt. 21:43 in which Jesus announces "That the Kingdom of God shall be taken from you (Israel), and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

### c. *The Compromises of Paul*

The Epistle to the Hebrews is the work of a strong mystical personality who at the same time attains a high level of conceptual abstraction. His theory of the constitution of history through the complementary pre-Christian and Christian epochs, of the constitution of the community through the Spirit of Christ and the faith of the believers, etc., is a doctrine for the select. The greatness of Paul lies in his quality as a statesman that enables him to fill in the abstractions of Hebrews, and to transpose the community of the perfect with Christ into an idea that took into account the practical problems of a community that did not at all consist of perfect saints. The Epistles of Paul present the momentous step from radical perfectionism to the compromise with the realities of the Christian community in its environment. From Hebrews the path could have led to a small community of saints; Paul opens the way to imperial expansion, the way to Rome; the feeling of this "destiny" strongly pervades Acts.

### aa. The Compromise with History

Revealing for the realistic mentality of Paul is the adaptation of the epochal construction, at the price of its simple grandeur, to

the facts of the world in which he had to preach the Gospel to the gentiles. The old law and the new law were insufficient as an empirical pattern of civilization. He retains the epochal function of the appearance of the Messiah but he adds to the Israelitic law ■ natural law, a law of the gentiles. God has revealed himself to the gentiles through his creation (Rom. 1:19-20), to Israel through the written law, and now to mankind through the pneumatic law of Christ that is engraved in the hearts of the believers through their faith. The three great realms of the pagan, the Israelitic, and the Christian world are thus fixed, ■ pattern that dominated Western thought well into the nineteenth century, when it began to crumble under the impact of our increased knowledge of Asiatic and primitive civilizations that had to be integrated into the history of mankind.

#### bb. The Compromise with the Weakness of Man—The Differences of Gifts and the Mystical Body

The second realistic achievement was the adaptation of the community organization to the weakness of man. The renovation of the personality in the Spirit of Christ would in most cases not be so radical that frequent lapses would not occur. There is in the community ■ natural hierarchy of higher and lower degrees of perfection that expresses itself in a social stratification into apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers whose function is "the perfecting of the saints . . . till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:11-13). The community is a unit in the spirit: "There is One body, and One Spirit . . . One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all," but "unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift (*charisma*) of Christ" (Eph. 4:4-7). Chapter 12 of 1 Corinthians elaborates the idea of the body of Christ in which every personality type has its function, the types complementing each other as the members of the body; the unity between them is constituted by the Spirit by which they have been baptized. Baptism is the sacrament of "embodiment" into the *corpus mysticum* of which Christ is the head (1 Cor. 12:13). The body symbolism is strengthened through the conception of Christ as the second Adam, the spiritual father of



the reborn Christian personality. "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made ■ quickening spirit. . . . And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Cor. 15:45-49).

#### cc. The Law of Love

The idea of Hebrews and Paul's idea of the mystical body concern primarily the constitution of the community. With regard to the relations between the members, the rules of social ethics as against the political rules proper, the attitude of Paul is strongly traditional. In the chapter on Israel we indicated that one of the great advantages of the young Christian community was the reception of the Israelitic social code. In Rom. 13:9-10, Paul refers to the Ten Commandments as the body of rules that should be observed and continues: "if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." Love is the comprehensive supplement to the old law; no detailed casuistry is visible as yet, and we assume that it was not necessary under the conditions of the first-generation communities in which the eschatological sentiment still held an important place.

#### dd. Eschatological Indifference to Social Problems

The indifference toward social problems that we noticed in connection with the attitude toward property is still prevalent. The important passage in 1 Tim. 6 on the one hand admonishes the slave to be content with his position and to fulfill his duties toward his master loyally; and the freeman, ■■ the other hand, not to be greedy and acquisitive "for the love of money is the root of all evil." Puritans may like to recall the admonition that those who "suppose that gain is godliness" are "destitute of the truth": "from such withdraw thyself" (6:5). But the very fact of the admonition proves that the community at Ephesus was already beset with the problems that have troubled the later Christian era. There seem to have been Christian slaves who failed in the respect due their Christian masters because they were their "brethren." "Let them not despise the masters, because they are brethren" (1 Tim. 6:2). The situation is essentially the same as that of the revolting German peasants

in the sixteenth century who, like the slaves of Ephesus, fell into the misunderstanding that the spiritual freedom of the renovated personality was a charter of social liberties. The transition from the idea of spiritual brotherhood to social revolt is the inevitable result of the tension between the invisible kingdom of Heaven and the all-too-visible order of this world in which it is embedded.

#### ee. Governmental Authority Ordained by God

Loyalty to the social status is thus made a Christian duty, not because Paul and the author of 1 Timothy are conservatives or advocates of class interests, but because the social status belongs to "this world" and, therefore, should not be an object of overwhelming interest for the renovated Christian. The same rule applies to the relations with governmental authorities proper. The magistrates of the Roman empire have to be respected, for "there is no authority but of God."<sup>15</sup>

It is the function of "The authorities that be ■■■ ordained of God" (Rom. 13:1) to wield the power of the sword over evildoers; resistance against the government would be resistance against the will of God. The relation with government is again determined not by a rule that envisages ■ permanent establishment, but as a provisional arrangement that is necessitated by the coexistence of the invisible realm with the world until, with the second coming of Christ, the tension between the two is resolved into the visible supernatural glory of the kingdom of God (2 Thess. 2). The peculiar character of the revealed invisible realm, embedded in the world, fixes the outlines of the later great problem of the relations between the church and the state down to our days.

15. I am replacing the term *power* of the King James Version by *authority* in order to avoid confusion with the *mana* of Jesus ■ the *power* of the kingdom of Heaven. The Greek word is *exousia*. The *exousia*, the governmental authority, is "ordained" by God, but it is not permeated by the heavenly dynamis; the magistrate is not a member of the mystical body.



## Christianity and the Nations

### §1. The Difficulties of Paul

#### *a. The Universalist Idea of Paul and the Assertion of Ethnic Differences*

The theory of the Christian community ■■ it was developed in the Pauline circle is a climax. The great history of Christianity as ■ world force had yet to come, but into this history were introduced new factors that turned the course of Christian evolution away from Pauline ideas. Paul had found the essential compromises with the world. The theory of the charismata, of the different spiritual gifts in the one body of Christ, had prevented Christianity from becoming ■ religious aristocracy and given it ■ broad popular basis; potentially, mankind as ■ whole could be organized in the new community. The recognition of the existing social structure, furthermore, had made the community compatible with any society into which Christianity would spread, influencing social relations only through the slowly transforming force of brotherly love. And, finally, governmental authority was integrated into the community ■■ being ordained by God, making the community compatible with any form of government. The outlines were given for the creation of a new people out of the Spirit of Christ, of a people that would grow deeper and deeper into the existing word, slowly transforming the nations and civilizations into the kingdom of God.<sup>1</sup>

1. For introduction to, and further bibliography on, the problems of this chapter see the following articles in CAH, vol. 11 (1936): B. H. Streeter, *The Rise of Christianity*, chap. 7; Franz Cumont, *The Frontier Provinces of the East*, chap. 15; and these in vol. 12 (1939): A. D. Nock, *The Development of Paganism in the Roman Empire*, chap. 12; F. C. Burkitt, *Pagan Philosophy and the Christian Church*, chap. 13, and *The Christian Church in the West*, chap. 15; N. H. Baynes, *The Great Persecution*, chap. 19, and *Constantine*, chap. 20.

This imperial idea of Christianity has not been realized in history, though it has blossomed out, in the Middle Ages, into the dream of Dante: One God, One Emperor, One Christian People. What prevented the realization of the dream was the national and civilizational diversification of mankind. The nations of the Mediterranean and the Near Eastern world had succumbed to the conquests of Alexander and Rome politically, but their individualities were strong enough to reassert themselves in the contact with Christianity and to split the unity of the kingdom of God into several Christian churches.

### *b. The Conflict with the Jewish-Christian Community*

The problem had occupied Paul. In 1 Cor. 1:22 ff., he raises his complaint: "The Jews want signs and the Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach the crucified Christ; that is a scandal to the Jews and a folly to the nations; to those, however, who are called, be they Jews or Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God." Paul had reasons for the complaint. The Jewish tribal tradition asserted itself strongly in the Jewish-Christian community of Jerusalem in the form of the demand that the "gentiles" (members of the *gentes, ta ethne*) who accepted Christianity should at the same time submit to the law of Moses. This would have been an almost insuperable obstacle to the spread of Christianity. A severe clash ensued between the advocates of the gentile mission, particularly Paul, and the advocates of the Jewish tradition. The issue was finally settled by a Council of the Apostles (see the report on the council in Acts 15) fixing the conditions of gentile membership and reducing the legal prescriptions to a minimum.<sup>2</sup> The settlement did not do away,

2. The settlement of the issue was accompanied, as we have seen, by the creation of an institution, the Council of the Apostles. The connection between the settlement of issues and the development of public forms for making decisions is fundamental for the early Church until the institutional framework is practically completed by the creation of the Ecumenic Council (the first, the Council of Nicaea, 325 A.D., was held in order to settle the question of Arianism). The development of these public institutions is not quite independent of parallel Roman imperial institutions—the regional bishops' conference, for instance, the synod, may be assumed to be influenced by the model of the Roman provincial diet—but in relation to later Western history, they offer the types on which our institutions of representative government are modeled. The importance of this development lies in the institutionalization of the Spirit. The decision of the synod or council is supposed to be spiritually correct

however, with the local development of the Jewish-Christian community. The church of Jerusalem was under the leadership of James, the brother of Jesus, and we can discern the tendencies toward a caliphatic solution of the church organization that might have prevailed in Christianity, as it did later in Islam, if the Church of Jerusalem had gained the ascendancy. The course of history stopped any evolution in this direction abruptly when, with the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in 70, the Jewish-Christian community was practically destroyed; remnants survived until the fourth century, then the church disappeared.

### *c. The Hellenistic Pneumatics*

The tribal parochialism of the Jews of Jerusalem was one danger that beset the idea of Paul in his own time; the other came from the Hellenistic Greeks. The complaint quoted above is taken from 1 Corinthians. The First Epistle to the Corinthians deals with the problem of the Hellenistic pneumatics, the prophets who speak in "tongues." While the Jewish tradition threatened to smother Christianity under the Mosaic law, the pneumatics threatened to destroy the incipient communities through personal inspirations that were not communicable to the other brethren. Chapter 14 of 1 Corinthians is what may be called a parliamentary code for ecstatic tongue-speakers. Nobody shall speak in tongues under divine inspiration unless he himself or another one of those present is able to translate the prophetic gibberish into articulate speech for the benefit of the community; if a second one is overcome by the spirit, the first has immediately to sit down; there never should be more than two or three at a session, etc. The stark individualism of the personal communication with God that cannot be handed on to the community is not condemned, but it is restrained by Paul. The charisma of the pneumatics remains important in the following decades, but by the beginning of the second century it is superseded in the community life by the charisma of the presbyterian or episcopal office. The Christian community life finds its definite form in the episcopal office and in the episcopal synods and councils; the spirit expresses itself in the majority decisions of the councils.

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and has to prevail against minority opinions in matters of doctrine, which by the very fact that they are opinions of a minority are proved to be heretical.

## §2. The National Cores

### *a. Syrian-Egyptian-Greek-Western Christianity*

The difficulties of Paul were a premonition of the later problems leading to the church splits. Wherever Christianity penetrated, the regional and national traditions produced variations of the Christian experience that became the seeds of schisms. The interpretation of these splits is complicated to an unusual degree because it is not simply a question of the Christian community breaking asunder along older national lines. Other elements enter the picture in bewildering number, and in many instances it is impossible to disentangle the factors and to arrive at an adequate formula for the events and the ideas that produced them. Before entering into the intricacies, let us state therefore the general result about which there can be no doubt. The first community to split off from the Great Church was Nestorian Christianity; the Nestorian party separated after the Council of Ephesus in 431; the national core of this church was the upper Mesopotamian population. The second split ensued after the Council of Chalcedon in 451 when the Monophysitic Church separated, with the Egyptians as the national core. The tension, finally, between the Greek East and the Latin West dragged on for centuries, the final split coming only in 1054, when the Orthodox Church with the Byzantine Greeks as the national core separated from the Catholic West.

### *b. The Cross-Pattern of Factors—National, Civilizational, Dogmatic*

While the outlines are clear, we cannot speak of more than national cores in the separate churches for they are distinctly not national Christian organizations. We have to take into further account at least the following three factors: (1) ethnic boundary lines in the Mediterranean and the Near East were not strict; the colonial settlements of the Hellenic poleis, the conquest of Alexander, and the expansion of Rome had resulted in an intermingling of populations that defied unraveling; (2) the older ethnic differences were not always causative in the Christian situation because Hellenism had overlaid the eastern Mediterranean and Asia Minor with a civilization that frequently, and particularly in the cities, determined intellectual and spiritual affinities more strongly than the ethnic

descent of a person; (3) while ethnic and civilizational differences were strong determinants, the dividing lines ran, on the level of conscious ideas, along differences of Christian doctrine; the several possible stands that could be taken with regard to the Christological question were independent factors in the great alignment.

As a consequence of the operation of these factors, we are faced by a rich variety of phenomena. We see, for instance, the Church of Lyons reach an early importance; it would be rash, however, to see in it a manifestation of Latin Christianity, for Lyons was an offshoot of the Greek colony of Marseilles and the ascendancy of Lyons is an event in Greek Christianity. One of the most brilliant periods of the Greek Church, the fourth century, is dominated on the other hand by the brothers Basil and Gregory of Nyssa and by Gregory of Nazianzus, all of whom were Cappadocians. We can opine on the question whether Origen should be considered primarily a Hellenistic figure because of the strong Gnostic elements in his theology, or whether we should see in his appearance a significant early manifestation of Coptic Christianity because he was an Egyptian. In the Latin Church, the towering figures of Tertullian and Augustine were Africans [natives of the Roman province Africa, corresponding roughly to modern Tunisia and the northwest corner of Algeria]; it seems to be possible to trace their Africanism even in the style of their language. Both, however, were profoundly influenced by Asiatic developments: Tertullian joined the Phrygian Montanist movement; Augustine was, for a time, a Manichaean. In some cases, the connection between a Christological position and the national element was close, as in the fusion of Monophysitism and Egyptian nationality in the Coptic Church, so close that the Greek-Egyptians of Alexandria separated and organized a community of their own that remained in communion with the emperor at Constantinople, the sect of the Melchites. In other instances, the link is almost a historical curiosity, as in the case of Arianism. Arianism arose as a distinctly Eastern heretical movement in Antioch and Alexandria, and it became, through the accident of Arian missionaries, the form of Christianity that was embraced by Germanic tribes; it determined decisively the relations between the conquering Germanic peoples and Latin Catholicism in Africa and Italy and was a fundamental ideological factor in Justinian's campaigns for the reconquest of the West.

### *c. The Proselytizing Character of the New Communities*

The examples show a type of political structure that differs widely from the Hellenic polis, or the Macedonian military monarchy, or the older Mesopotamian empires, and also differs widely from the modern national state structure. The factor that imposes its signature on the time is the proselytizing character of the new spiritual realms. The polis was a cult unit as a whole as well as in its subdivisions; it was not a missionary institution. Athens and Sparta could fight to the death, but nobody could conceive the idea of "Athenianizing" Spartans or "Spartanizing" Athenians. The older pattern of the close harmony between an ethnically more or less uniform population, a civilization peculiar to the group, and its organization as a power unit was impossible after the appearance of the spiritual communities with supernatural and supranational claims. The forces enumerated remained in highly unstable balance, and the most we can say is that, beginning with the third century, a tendency became ever stronger to bring the power organizations into closer relation with the spiritual communities and their ecclesiastical organizations, a tendency that, for the Roman empire, reached its high point under Constantine. The complete correlation of empire, national community, and spiritual community was never achieved. The failure to achieve the correlation found its final expression in the theory of Augustine, which may properly be regarded as marking the end of the first period of Christianity.

### *d. The Political Function of the Christological Heresies*

The period has, therefore, no political theory if we insist on finding a body of ideas that would be comparable to the cosmological ideas of the Mesopotamian empires, or to the theory of the Greek polis with its culmination in Plato and Aristotle, or to the modern theory of the constitutional state. There is no theory of the "Roman empire" for the good reason that the empire was an existential fragment that required for its complete and comparatively stable existence a spiritual community basis that it could find only through the association with communities of the Mithras or the Christian type. The empire was primarily a power apparatus, not the manifestation of the political will of a people. This apparatus underwent



institutional changes from the principate of Augustus to the dominate of Diocletian, but the accompaniment of ideas was extremely thin and never reached the stage of ■ great system. From the side of the spiritual communities, on the contrary, the amount of theory is enormous, but, in the nature of the case, it is primarily concerned with the structure of the personalities of Christ and of man and of the community existing between the two. This body of ideas does not go very deeply into the analysis of the power structure. Nevertheless, we have to acknowledge the early centuries of Christian theology as centuries of eminently political speculation. There is practical agreement today that speculation on the substance of Christ does not constitute ■ mere item of curiosity for historians of Christian dogma, but that the history of the Christological heresies is an important, if not the decisive, part of the history of political ideas of the period.

### §3. Johannine Christianity

The vastness of the materials and problems does not permit even ■ survey in this context. I single out for ■ few remarks ■ trend in Eastern Christianity that starts with the Gospel of John and has ■ specific importance because it has led to the organization of the New Testament ■■ the canon of sacred writings of Christianity. At the same time, the problems that arose may give an inkling of the abyss that separated Eastern ideas from the ideas in the area of the Roman and Hellenistic world.

#### *a. The Persian Elements in the Gospel of John*

The Gospel of John uses to a certain extent the same materials as the Synoptic Gospels, but it embeds them in ■ different system of fundamental community ideas. The trend of the Synoptic Gospels is characterized clearly by the addition, in Luke and Matthew, of the narrative of the birth, descent, and youth of Jesus, obviously assimilating the person of Christ to the pattern of Hellenistic cult deities. The Gospel of John, though it is later than Luke and Matthew, does not know anything about the birth and youth of Jesus, but organizes the appearance of Christ in a cosmic drama. In ■ clearly Persian symbolism the Logos was in the beginning; the Logos was with God and he was himself divine; the Logos is the principle of Life and the Light of man. "The Light shineth through the darkness, and

the darkness comprehended it not." The world is a struggle between the substances of Light and Darkness. Christ is an incarnation of the Light, but not the last victorious one: he has to depart again, because the Prince of the World (the Persian Ahriman) is coming for another ~~aeon~~. When this aeon of Darkness is passed, then the Logos will send the last Light manifestation, the Helper, the Paraclete, who will overcome the Darkness and bring the victory of Light (John 14:30, 15:26, 16:7). The conception differs widely from that of the Synoptic Gospels and from the Pauline community idea. The Western trend goes in the direction of the royal-priestly figure of Christ as the head of the spreading community in history. The Eastern conception lives in the symbolism of a struggle of substances. (The Gospel of John actually contains the elements of the later great Christological discussions that led to the splits of Eastern from Western Christianity.) The Light is the Spirit of Truth—reminiscent of the Truth of the Achaemenid inscriptions—this identification of the Light with the Truth leads to the dramatic scene in which Christ stands before Pilate and answers to the question whether he is a king in the affirmative: "This is why I ~~was~~ born, and for this did I come into the world that I should bear witness to the Truth; all those who are of the substance of Truth hear my voice." And the Roman who is brought up in the world of cult deities, now being faced by this explanation of the Truth, of which men ~~can~~ be, asks somewhat bewildered but with not too much concern: "What sort of thing is this Truth?" (John 18:37 ff.).

### *b. The Gospel of John, a New Testament*

The Gospel of John is the first great manifestation of Eastern Christianity, but it represents in addition a decisive innovation in Christian literature. While it is later than the Pauline letters and the other Gospels, it continues neither the one nor the other of these types of writing. It is the first attempt at a comprehensive interpretation of the Christian creed, building the narrative of Jesus into an Eastern cosmological drama. Though it ~~was~~ incorporated later in the canon as one of its books, it is a New Testament in itself. It is the first piece of Christian literature that was written as a *Summa* of the creed, as a sacred book that should stand for the Christian in place of the Old Testament.

### *c. The Marcionite Movement*

The internal problems of the Johannine Gospel as well as the problem of the Christian Sacred Book were continued in the Marcionite heresy. Marcion came from Sinope (like Diogenes); his foundation of the Redeemer Church reached its first great power between 150 and 190. He made the systematic attempt to eliminate from Christianity its historicity. The achievement of Paul had been the conception of the revealed kingdom of Heaven under Christ as constituting the ultimate historical reality of mankind; the Jewish prehistory was integrated into the conception as the period of preparation provided by God; the new epoch was the fulfillment of the promises made by God under the old order. Marcion reversed the Pauline construction and conceived of the God of the Old Testament as a wicked demon who could not be identical with the Father who ordered the appearance of Christ. The two Persian gods (Ahriman and Ormuzd) appear as the evil demon of matter and law on the one hand and the savior god who wishes to help the human race on the other.

As far as the sacred writings were concerned, Marcion therefore rejected the Old Testament entirely and created a canon of Christian writings consisting of a new gospel, which he composed himself by purging the Gospel of Luke of its Jewish elements, and of ten Letters of Paul. The Marcionite canon became the model on which the canon of the Great Church was built: the Gospel and the Epistles of Paul replaced the law and the prophets.

### *d. Montanism—The Paraclete—The Third Realm*

The movement of the Johannine type reached its climax in Montanism. Montanus, formerly a priest of Cybele in Phrygia, was soon after his conversion to Christianity overcome by the Spirit and became convinced that his body housed the Paraclete whose appearance was predicted by John. The Montanist sect as such had no particular quarrel with the Great Church, but the appearance of the Paraclete, speaking the will of Christ directly through Montanus, was a challenge to the Church, which was just about to organize herself under episcopal authority. The episcopal charisma of office would be of no avail against the Spirit of God in person. The episcopate of Asia reacted fiercely and condemned the new prophecy

as heretical. Montanism survived as an important Asiatic sect until the fifth century but was practically extinguished by the time of Justinian. The movement had no direct sequence within the Christian Church, but elements of Johannine Christianity reappeared in Manichaeism. Nevertheless, Montanism has a great historical significance as having produced within the Christian orbit the first Third Realm, the first *Dritte Reich*, a possibility that has remained inherent in Christianity and has resulted in important later theories and community evocations.

## §4. The Magian Nations

### *a. Spengler's Theory of the Magian Nations*

From the basis of the preceding analysis we can now venture **■** to the level of problems that has been most clearly circumscribed by Oswald Spengler in his *Decline of the West*. Christianity is not the only movement in its time that evokes a spiritual, supranational community with the consequences just outlined for its relations with the power apparatus, the ethnic groups, and the dominant civilization. Spengler is, as far **■** I can see, the only theorist who tried to classify the phenomenon in its larger aspects and to give it **■** name: he called the new communities the Magian Nations. For lack of a better name I shall use the term in this context, but the use shall not mean that I adopt Spengler's construction of history that lies behind it. The Magian Nations are **■** new type of community, resting on the consensus of the believers and crossing ethnic lines. According to Spengler the type is the specific expression of the "soul" of the Aramaic "landscape," and the whole class of movements belongs to the history of "Arabian" civilization. The construction may be questioned, but the phenomena are real and present **■** problem.

### *b. Jewry, Mazdaism, Manichaeism*

Parallel with Christianity, other new religious communities arose in the Near East or older ones entered new phases with a structure similar to that of Christianity. First of all it should be noted that the postexilic Jewry of Palestine that clung to the foundations of Ezra and Nehemiah was only a fraction of the larger Jewish community that remained in Babylon and became the center of **■** strongly proselytizing Jewish consensus under the Resh Galutha, the Exilarch in

Ctesiphon. In the following centuries Judaization on a large scale extended to the south into Arabia and Africa, to the north into Persia, the Caucasus, and the Khazars. In the Parthian and Persian wars against Rome the Jewish contingents were considerable. Mazdaism spread from Persia to the neighboring empires, to China in the east and to Rome in the west. In the form of the Mithras cult it extended as far as Britain. The expansion of Manichaeism from the center at Ctesiphon to the west was a serious danger to Christianity by 400, and remnants can be traced in the sects of southern France in the eleventh century. In the east it extended deep into China; our most important sources on Manichaeism come from Chinese Turkestan. The last of the great movements, Islam, came from Arabia. It swept over the Near Eastern world, and the earlier Magian Nations of the area have never fully recovered from the storm. By the beginning of the eighth century Constantinople was threatened, while in the west the Islamic expansion had gone through Africa and Spain into southern France. The Latin Church with its seat in Rome was almost suffocated out of existence, the Byzantine empire was on the defensive and could not give serious assistance in the Lombard troubles, and the pope took the momentous step of linking the destiny of Western Christianity to the rising power of the Franks.

### *c. The Transformation of Christianity in the Classical Territory*

The recognition of the Magian Nations as ■ class of movements spreading over the Near Eastern and Mediterranean world permits ■ closer understanding of the processes within the boundaries of the Roman empire. Christianity spread from the East into the sphere of Hellenistic and Roman civilization, that is, into the sphere of the polis and its cults. While retaining its character as ■ consensus of believers, it adapted itself to the forms of the civilization into which it penetrated. The figure of Christ acquired characteristics of a cult god. Mary rapidly acquired ■ function that permitted her to absorb the emotions that in the Hellenistic ■■■■ were concentrated on the mother-goddesses of the cults. Innumerable saints arose and absorbed the traditions of local divinities. Revealing are the events accompanying the Council of Ephesus, 431, when the Nestorian conception of the substance of Christ, which stressed the humanity of the Savior and his function as the brotherly helper

of man, was declared heretical and the [notion of] divinity of Christ prevailed. When the decision was reached, the city of the Diana of Ephesus broke out in a wild celebration of Mary, who was thus acknowledged as the *Theotokos*, the Mother of God.

*d. The Easternization of the Classical Cults—The Pagan Church—The Meaning of the Persecutions*

The ~~reverse~~ process took place in the Hellenistic-Roman civilization. The polis cults weakened, and we notice the tendency toward ■ functional identification [meaning a merger of identity] of gods who were previously separate local deities. Priesthoods of cult gods could be cumulated because they were no longer priesthoods of different gods but of the same god who appeared in different manifestations. The world of the classic gods evolved toward "paganism," understood not negatively as the world of non-Christian religiousness, but as a community of the same structure as the Magian Nations who originated in Asia Minor. The history of the Roman empire is the history of the struggle between two churches, the Christian and the pagan. The great persecutions of Christianity were not persecutions of the Christians by the Roman power organization, but of the Christian Church by the pagan church. They have exactly the same meaning as the later persecutions of paganism by the Christian Church when it dominated the empire, or as the bloody wars between the Christian churches, as for instance the war of the Orthodox Church against the Monophysite Church, or the wars between the orthodox and iconoclastic factions, or between the Orthodox Church and Islam. The first great organized persecution under Decius, in 249–251, shows the essential features of the problem. Historians ~~are~~ not quite sure whether the persecution was "political" or "religious"; the answer is that it was neither the ~~one~~ nor the other, because the categories of post-Lockean constitutional theory do not apply to the situation. The immediate occasion for the persecution was the preparation for the Gothic war: the whole people of the empire should be united in the sacrifice to the emperor; the gods of Rome should give victory as the reward for the loyalty of the people. The demand that all Christians should prove their loyalty by sacrifice ~~was~~ obviously not a "political" measure in the modern sense because the "political" or "strategic" situation could in no way be influenced by the sacrifice; and obviously it was

not a "religious" measure in the modern sense since apparently no abjuration of faith was demanded of the Christians. That the persecution was, indeed, an event in the Magian struggle becomes clear through the close relation of the Decian measures with the somewhat earlier parallel measures in the Sassanid empire. In 226 Ardashir I had been finally victorious over the Arsacid dynasty; the victory was followed by a strongly centralizing reorganization of the nation with support of the Mazdaean clergy. Under Ardashir and Shapur, Mazdaism became the state religion, and the establishment was confirmed by persecutions of the non-Mazdaean communities (Jews, Christians, etc.). The ~~successes~~ of the Sassanids were a strong inducement for Decius to try a similar experiment for the Roman empire. The vacillations that were characteristic of the Roman policy also have their parallels in the Sassanid measures. Under Shapur I, Mani appeared in Ctesiphon and found favor. Under Varahran I (272-275), Manichaeism, which had expanded, was rudely exterminated under pressure of the Mazdaean clergy and Mani was executed.



## The Emperor

### §I. The Problem—The Easternization of the Empire

Historians usually treat the problems of Christianity after the ideas concerning the Roman empire and the position of the emperor. Although the arrangement involves some chronological overlapping, I have reversed the order, because Christianity and the other spiritual movements are the main driving forces of the period while the empire lives on the impetus imparted by republican Rome until it is slowly transformed and submerged by the eastern forces. The transformation can be traced symptomatically through the changing personnel of the emperors themselves: the Roman Julian-Claudian house is followed by the Flavians of humble Italic origin; with Trajan the empire passes to Spaniards, with Septimius Severus to Africans and Syrians, until with Claudius II Gothicus the sequence of the great Illyrians begins leading to the reign of Diocletian. With the change of personnel the ideas of government also changed, until the idea of the emperor had assumed a content that had little to do with the Roman heritage. The transfer of the seat of government to the East, first to Nicomedia, then to Constantinople, put the seal on an evolution in the course of which the *imperium* of the Roman republic was transformed into a Caesaropapist Eastern empire, comparable to Sassanid Persia or the Islamic Caliphate, while the West developed toward the *sacrum imperium* with its two centers, the spiritual one south and the temporal north of the Alps.

The change of ideas does not express itself in systems of political thought but has to be reconstructed from an infinity of sources: historical reports, letters, laws, sacramental formulas, inscriptions,



coins, etc., which it is impossible to present in a general history of ideas. We have to confine ourselves to a brief indication of the two main bodies of ideas: those stemming from the republican period of Rome, and those stemming from the Hellenistic kingdoms and from farther East.

## §2. The Roman Heritage

### *a. The Fiction of the Restoration of the Republic—The Name Augustus*

The lack of a systematic rationalized theory is not accidental. The Roman theory took every conceivable precaution to have the imperial position appear as a republican magistracy. Warned by the fate of Caesar, Octavian himself inaugurated the policy of this fiction. Any attempt at open kingship would have run into republican anti-royal sentiment, which was still strong. The settlement of 27 B.C., establishing the position of Augustus, had the official form of a "restoration of the republic." The only suggestion of kingship was contained in the name *Augustus* decreed by the senate. The name *Augustus* was associated with a line of Ennius referring to Romulus who had established Rome *augusto augurio*. The name of *Romulus* itself, which would have designated Octavian as the second founder of Rome, was rejected, according to Suetonius, as too strongly reminiscent of the hated royal office. The name *Augustus* indicated, according to Dio, "something more than human."<sup>1</sup>

### *b. The Evolution of the Princeps and His Clientele*

Otherwise, the new ruler referred to himself as the *princeps*, the "leading citizen," the term from which the institution was named the principate. The function of Augustus as princeps has been revealed recently by von Premerstein as the most important element from the point of view of the foundation of his power. The principate is not an institution created by Octavian; it goes back into republican history. The term *princeps* designated any citizen of social influence, an influence that was based on the number and quality of his *clients*, his followers, who stood to him in a special relation of loyalty (of *fides*). Clients could be acquired through favors of various

1. See for this question and the sources Sir Henry Stuart Jones, *The Princeps*, CAH, vol. 10 (1934), chap. 5.

sorts, such as political aid, loans, personal gifts, etc. Early on the clientele of a princeps reached considerable proportions. Tiberius Gracchus (tribune 133 B.C.) appeared in public accompanied by three or four thousand followers, the majority of whom may aptly be described as "tough boys," useful as a bodyguard and for street fights with political opponents. During the civil war period the [extent and significance of the] clientele increased and assumed formidable proportions when a victorious general could favor his veteran soldiers by land settlements and thus transform an army of the republic into his personal clientele. Soldiers' settlements frequently took the form of the settlement of a military unit, for instance of a legion, in a contiguous area with the former officers as civil magistrates. When the vicissitudes of the civil war made it necessary, all the princeps had to do was to issue the call to his clientele villages in order to have an army at his disposal. The clientele relation was passed down from a princeps to his heirs. Octavian, for instance, could start his opposition to Antony with the aid he received from Caesar's veterans in Campania. The social and political position of a princeps was dependent on the possession of wealth and vice versa: wealth to maintain an army, and an army to maintain the stream of income and war loot. To Crassus is attributed the quip that only he could be called a rich man who could pay an army.<sup>2</sup>

The civil war had with regard to the social structure of the republic the consequence that a host of minor principes was reduced to comparative insignificance while the political influence became concentrated in the hands of three or four men who had appropriated into their respective clienteles the military power of Rome. The transition from republican to imperial Rome is marked organizationally by the creation of a practical monopoly of the position of princeps by the concentration in the hands of the ruler of all the means through which a clientele could be created.

### *c. The Oath for the Princeps*

The bond of loyalty between a client and his patron was informal in the earlier period of the republic; it was the factual consequence of an accepted favor. With the extension of the institution to large

2. See for the whole question Anton von Premerstein, *Vom Werden und Wesen des Prinzipats*, ed. Hans Volkmann, *Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Abteilung, Neue Folge*, vol. 15 (Munich, 1937).

political parties and military contingents there appears, by the time of Sulla, a formal oath of loyalty as a safeguard of the relation. Caesar ~~was~~ the first to make the attempt to take the citizenship at large into the oath, and thus to transform the people into his clientele. Octavian received before his decisive campaign against Antony, in 32 B.C., the oath of Italy and the western provinces, making him the "war leader" (*belli dux*) of the people. Under his successors the oath became first an institution requested at the ascent to the imperial position, and finally ~~was~~ renewed annually by the population of the empire. There is a continuous line of evolution from the free clientele formation of the republican period to the annual oath of allegiance to the emperor on the part of the people, which could be refused only at the risk of being suspected of treason.

#### d. The Name Emperor

Of the voluminous bundle of powers and honors connected with the position of the princeps, the name *imperator* deserves special attention because toward the end of the first century it developed into the official designation of the Roman ruler and because the title of emperor has superseded in the Western world in dignity the older title of king (*rex*). The title of *imperator* could be given in republican Rome to a victorious general holding an *imperium* [powers including forms of administrative and judicial authority linked to a military command]; he preserved this title until he came back to Rome; on passing the city limits, or at the latest after the triumph, the *imperium* and the title ceased. For Caesar the senate decreed after his victory at Munda, 45 B.C., for the first time in Roman history the name, not the title, *imperator*. Whereas the title ended with the *imperium* [which was, in principle, of limited duration], the name could be borne for life and, in the case of Caesar, be passed on to one's heirs. The appellation did not carry new powers or *imperium*, but awarded permanently the special honors due to an *imperator*.

The device made it possible to elevate the ruler above the rank of other officeholders while covering the practically royal position by a republican name. The equivalent used in the Greek texts, *autokrator* [one who rules by himself; an absolute master], renders the implications of rulership better than the Roman name.<sup>3</sup>

3. On the *imperator* question see ~~von~~ Premerstein, *Vom Werden und Wesen des Prinzipats*, 245 ff.

### *e. The Protectorate of the Princes*

To the obligation of the citizenry as "clients" corresponded the obligation of the princeps to protect the republic against internal and external dangers. In order to enable the princeps to fulfill the duties of a lord protector vast discretionary powers were decreed for Augustus in 29 B.C. The powers were renewed for him and his successors and comprised ■ practically complete dispensation from the law of the republic. They allowed the princeps to have recourse to special measures whenever he deemed it necessary in the interest of the public weal. This unlimited power of the *cura et tutela rei publicae* (care and protection of the republic) may be said to have been the all-important legal basis on which the principate could evolve into an absolute monarchy of the Oriental type. Curiously enough this aspect of the Augustan protectorate is frequently neglected by historians in comparison with another feature of the delegation of discretionary powers. Vast power was transferred to the princeps by a formal law, a *lex* of the people, the *lex de imperio*, usually later called the *lex regia*. This *lex* implied the legal construction of a transfer of power from the people to the princeps. While in the Roman imperial situation this element of transfer was distinctly not the most important feature of the institution, in the political theory of the Middle Ages it became an argument in the discussion about the allocation of political power when anti-imperial publicists insisted that the imperial power rested originally with the people and that the emperor held it only by delegation.

## §3. Eastern Influences

### *a. The Divinization of the Roman and Italic Emperors*

The contact of Rome with the Hellenistic East had caused an influx of elements of ruler worship even in republican times. Heroization of outstanding personalities was foreign to Rome, but Romans had received divine honors in the East, and by the time of Caesar and Augustus the heroization of rulers after their death was acceptable without resistance. Caesar became the *Divus Iulius* [godlike, divine Julius] and Octavian, as early as 40 B.C., the *Divi Filius* [son of the divine one]. The princeps himself, however, was not considered ■ a god in his lifetime, but rather ■ being ranking between man and God, ■ man surrounded by an aura of divinity that emanated

not from himself but from his office. The deification of the living emperor evolved in fits and starts. Caius Calligula insisted on his personal divinity; Claudius reverted to the Augustan tradition; Nero followed him in the earlier part of his reign but later identified himself with the sun god; Domitian (81-96) seems to have been the first emperor who in the later part of his reign preferred the address *Dominus et Deus* (Master and God).

*b. The Late Spaniards—Marcus Aurelius and Commodus*

A rumbling premonition of future developments came with the last of the Spanish emperors, with Marcus Aurelius and his son Commodus. The designation of Marcus as the "Stoic on the throne" is a label that obscures rather than reveals the significance of his political ideas for the evolution of the imperial institution. Cicero was a Stoic, too, but his Stoicism took, as we have seen, the form of a projection of Rome onto the cosmopolis; Cicero was Roman first and last. Marcus was the Spanish [not, of course, in the modern sense, but as descended from a family native to the Iberian peninsula under Roman rule] ruler of an international empire: "For me Antonine my city and fatherland is Rome, but man the world." The princeps had evolved from the first citizen of Rome to the first citizen of the world. He was devoted to the service of Rome, but Rome was not more than one of the many cities that "as it were houses" in the supreme world city [the cosmopolis].

The new attitude expressed itself in his break with the principle of selecting the "best" man as his successor; he forced his son on the senate, and one might say that with him the dynastic idea was grafted onto the principate, though it was yet to receive severe setbacks [the Antonines, until Marcus Aurelius, had selected their successors by adoption]. Under Commodus, the son, the decline of old Rome and the rise of a new idea of world order became still more marked, because the new conception could feed on the substance of the mystic-enthusiastic soul of the emperor, but the feeling that a decisive turn in the idea of Rome had come must have been strong even in Marcus, for he had taken care that his son assumed the *toga virilis* [marking his coming of age] in 175 A.D., on the day on which, according to the legend, Romulus had ascended to Heaven. The identification of the emperor with Romulus, a second founder

of Rome, which Augustus had declined, was now perfected: toward the end of his reign Commodus issued the order that he was to be addressed by the name of "Herculeus Romanus, the founder of Rome," the second founder taking the place of the first.<sup>4</sup> In the future the twelve months of the year were to be named after the twelve elements of his name (Lucius Aelius Aurelius Commodus Augustus Herculeus Romanus Exsuperatorius Amazoncius Invictus Felix Pius), symbolizing that he was the Lord of the World in time as well as in space. "The colossal statue that Nero set up, which later was turned into a statue of Helios, now became Hercules with the features of Commodus, the cult-statue of the city's founder."<sup>5</sup>

While there is no doubt about the fact of his deification, his religiousness had a distinctly nonclassical, Eastern quality. He created the cult of the *Jupiter summus exsuperantissimus* [supreme all-surpassing Jove], of a world god, who was the head of a universal system of divinities reflected the position of the emperor as the ruler of the world. Commodus practiced extensively the rites of alien gods, including the cruelties and obscenities of Eastern cults, such practices symbolizing the submission of the ruler of the world to the worldwide varieties of divine manifestation. These religious innovations of Commodus, together with his repression of the Roman nobility in favor of a new class of administrators drawn from all parts of the empire and with the organization of the court regime (harem of three hundred women and three hundred boys, concubines, government through a vizier, etc.), proved to be too much; after his murder, which had all the aspects of an Oriental harem affair, a reaction ensued, but the way was paved for the following African-Syrian period.

### c. The Syrian Emperors—Elagabalus, Alexander Severus

With the African Septimius Severus and his Syrian wife, Julia Domna, began the systematic legal construction of the imperial divine dynasty. Early in his reign Severus proclaimed himself, by a curious adoption decree, adopted into the family of Marcus Aurelius, in order to descend from a line of deified emperors; and he

4. It is impossible to go into the details of the epochal sentiments and constructions. I only wish to draw attention to the parallel problem in early Christianity with the designation of Christ as the second Adam, the second father of mankind.

5. Wilhelm Weber, *The Antonines*, CAH, vol. II (1936), chap. 9.

had his army proclaim the deification of Commodus, who had been condemned by the senate, in order to fill the awkward gap in the line. The imperial house becomes now the *domus divina* (the divine house). Coins of Severus represent him surrounded by a halo of sun rays and his wife with the moon symbols, thus identifying them with the Oriental sun and moon divinities. "The third century emperor is on the way to become 'partner of the stars, brother of the sun and the moon' like the Sassanid king."<sup>6</sup> The epithet of *invictus* (the unconquered), which was already used by Commodus, points to the definite association between the emperor and the Chaldean sun god.

The development that began with Severus reached a new climax with Elagabalus (218–222), a grandnephew of Julia Domna and a priest of the god Elagabalus of Emesa. Through him and his cousin Alexander Severus, a rich stream of Syrian cults poured into Rome. The transfer of the Baal of Emesa to Rome and the practice of his cult by the emperor-priest proved, however, again too severe a strain on the Roman tradition; the circumcised Augustus, who had married a Vestal virgin in order to symbolize the celestial union of Baal and Tanit, came to an early end. He was followed by his cousin with a senatorial regency committee that returned to the forms of the Antonine monarchy. The Syrian influence, nevertheless, remained strong through the emperor's mother and through the legal advisers Paul and Ulpian, of whom the latter at least was certainly Syrian. It should be noted perhaps that the famous passage of Ulpian to the effect that natural law is not confined to the human species but extends to all animals loses much of its strangeness if it is read in the light of the fact that the temples of Hierapolis and Palmyra in Syria still had sacred precincts in which animals were kept at large, the last survivals of an earlier zoolatric phase of Syrian religiousness.

#### *d. The Illyrian Emperors—Deus et Dominus*

Aurelian, the first of the Illyrian emperors, finally found the forms in which solar henotheism [the cult of a single divinity] and the divinity of the emperor became acceptable to Rome for the rest of the pagan period. The *sol invictus* for whom he built a temple at Rome and created a college of senatorial priests was in all probability still the Baal of Emesa, but not in his local form as a black stone,

6. W. Ensslin, *The End of the Principate*, CAH, vol. 12 (1939), chap. 10.

which, in contrast to Elegabalus, Aurelian wisely left in Syria, and divested of the Oriental ceremonial. The new god, the "Master of the Roman Empire," became the central god of a unified paganism, the companion and preserver of the emperor. On the coins of Aurelian appears the imperial style of *deus et dominus noster*, the living god and master; and at the same time begins the usage of speaking of the emperor in the inscriptions as *dominus noster* (our lord). How close the late pagan henotheism was to Christianity in its sentiments can be gathered from the formal prayer of Licinius before the battle with Maximinus in 313:

Highest God, we pray to thee,  
 Holy God, we pray to thee,  
 All Justice we commend to thee,  
 Our weal we commend to thee,  
 Our realm we commend to thee,  
 By thee we live, by thee we are victorious and successful,  
 Highest, Holy God, hear our prayers  
 We raise our arms to thee:  
 Hear us, o Holy, Highest God.





## The Law

### §1. The Greek Heritage

#### *a. The Structure of Legal Theory*

The theory of law developed between the end of the Roman republic and the end of the Roman empire into a body of doctrine that has retained ever since in Western history the status of a comparatively self-sufficient discipline within the wider framework of political theory. The variations of doctrine are infinite, but the foci of speculation remain fairly stable. They are determined today, as they were in the period under observation, by the complexes of *ius civile* [civil law], *ius gentium* [the law of nations], *ius positivum* [positive law], *ius naturale* [natural law], and *ius divinum* [divine law]. We have to attempt, therefore, at this juncture a systematic survey of the topics and inquire into the structure of the conceptual instruments that are fixed by the pagan and Christian theorists, as well as into the process of their formation.

We said that the theory of law acquired a comparatively self-sufficient status; this does not mean, however, that legal theory is an independent body of thought either with regard to its object or with regard to its categories. On the contrary, legal theory is a secondary discipline in the sense that the frame of fundamental concepts within which it moves is determined by ideas and evocations that lie outside the theory of law itself. The self-sufficiency is due partly to the fact that the great mythical determinants have not changed since the early Christian era, and partly to the fact that such changes as have occurred and occur at present penetrate extremely slowly into the field that is dominated by the legal mind. The theory of law is, within the field of political theory, the specific

domain of hieroglyphic thought, moving slowly by ritual reiteration of sacred symbols that change their meanings almost imperceptibly under the pressure of the movements in the active evocative sphere of thought.

### *b. The Three Phases of Greek Theory*

This highly conservative and change-resisting body of hieroglyphs was fixed in its main outlines in the first centuries of our era as the sedimentation of Hellenic, Hellenistic, Roman, and Christian mythical evocations. We have surveyed in preceding chapters the theory of law down to Cicero, and we can now summarize the typical features of this history as the starting point for the changes and additions of the Roman-Christian time. In the Greek theory of law we can distinguish three phases that have left their traces in later theory: (1) the stage of the primary myth of the people, (2) the intellectual disintegration of the myth in the age of the Sophists, (3) the period of the secondary myth of the soul. To the first phase, to the myth of the people, belongs the belief in the existing order as divinely willed; the order, the *nomos*, of political society is part of the cosmic order. Dissatisfaction with the order can express itself not by the revolutionary proposal of an alternative order, but only by the projection of the more perfect order into another aeon, the golden age from which man has fallen. The present order is willed by the gods in spite of its imperfections. The revolutionary self-assertion of the individual produces, then, in the second phase, the idea that the existing order is not all divine, but perhaps man-made. The *nomos* approaches the meaning of *convention*, while the alternative order appears under the symbol of *nature*. The demands of nature may assume the form either of an assertion of natural equality or of a natural inequality of men. In the third phase appears the Platonic myth of the soul, which attempts to re-create a divinely sanctioned polis out of the mythical forces of the soul of a savior. And parallel with it appears the other myth of the soul of Diogenes, which does not re-create the polis but envisages ■ new community, the cosmopolis. The divinely sanctioned traditional order with its differences of personality status domestically, and the differences of status between Hellenes and barbarians externally, is abandoned in favor of a world-*nomos*, emanating from ■ world-*logos* whose particles are the ordering element in every human soul, thus

introducing the idea of equality not as a proposition of intellectual revolt but as part of a new mythical evocation.

## §2. The Roman Theory of Law

### *a. The Ciceronian Identification of Roman Order and World Order*

This catalog of symbols resulting from the evocations of the Hellenic polis and from its disintegration was at the disposition of legal thinkers at the opening of the Roman imperial period. We have analyzed earlier the Ciceronian construction. The gulf between the Stoic world order and the Roman republican order was bridged by the ingenuous identification of Rome with the world. Cicero did not find it necessary to evoke an ideal order because he found it in the actual Roman order expanding imperially over the world. The *lex* of Rome had grown into the Eastern *nomos-logos*; the law of nature was the law of Rome. The *action* of Rome had succeeded in the opinion of Cicero where the *speculation* of the Greeks had failed. The profound difference between the Greek and the Roman spirit can find no symbol more eloquent than the difference between the attitude of Alexander, who prayed at Opis to the Gods for homonoia between the Greeks and barbarians, and the attitude of Cicero, who believed that the legions would do the job.

### *b. The Identification of Ius Gentium and Ius Naturale to the Time of Gaius*

The pieces of the puzzle fell into place, however, only in the pages of Cicero. History disagreed, and the conflict between the Stoic myth of the cosmopolis and the tribal orders continued. The renewed separation of the *ius naturale*, the natural law, from the actual historical law of the community can be traced in the change of meanings of the term *ius gentium* with the Roman lawyers. The jurists of the second century B.C. seem to have used the term *ius gentium* in order to designate a body of law that had arisen in dealings between Roman citizens and foreigners. It was roughly a designation for commercial law, originating in the increased contacts of Rome with the outside world. By the time of Cicero the term *ius gentium* seems to have shifted to the designation of such legal institutions as were common to all nations, while the term *ius*

*civile* referred to institutions that were peculiar to any one nation. The body of institutions common to all nations was considered to express the natural reason common to all mankind. Natural law and *ius gentium* were identical, and we find the two concepts still in the relation of identity in the *Institutes* of Gaius in the second century under the Antonines.<sup>1</sup>

*c. The Syrian Phase: The Separation of Ius Gentium and Ius Naturale—The Gentes as the Source of Imperfection*

Under the African-Syrian emperors with their staff of Syrian lawyers, the Eastern conception of *ius naturale* separated from the meaning of *ius gentium*. The split of the meanings occurred mainly on occasions of the discussion of slavery. Slavery is an institution of *ius gentium* (Ulpian in *Dig.* 1.1.4) while by nature all men are free. In his famous definition (*Dig.* 1.1.1 ff.) to which we referred in earlier contexts, Ulpian declares that natural law is what nature taught all living creatures, while *ius gentium* is the law used by the "tribes of men" (*gentes humanae*). "It is easy to understand that this law differs from the natural, because it is common only between men, while the former is common between all living creatures." There seems to be something in the nature of man that disturbs the pre-creational equality of all life and introduces elements of inequality. The meaning of the distinction is clarified by a passage (*Dig.* 1.1.5) from Hermogenianus, a lawyer of the time of Constantine who attributes to the *ius gentium* the introduction of "wars, separate peoples, foundations of realms, distinct dominions, boundary lines of fields," etc. The *gentes* themselves are obviously the cause of trouble. This is borne out by the definition of the *Institutes* of Justinian (1.2.2) according to which the *gentes* arose out of human necessities, and with them arose wars, prisoners, and servitude. Beyond the immediate orbit of Roman law, but continuing this line of definitions, we find, finally, a passage in the *Etymologies* of Isidore of Seville (seventh century) indicating that the topics of *ius gentium* were the siege of fortified places, wars, peace treaties, the inviolability of envoys, etc. The shift of meaning is foreshadowed

1. For introduction and bibliography see F. de Zulueta, *The Development of Law under the Republic*, CAH, vol. 9 (1932), chap. 21, and W. W. Buckland, *Classical Roman Law*, CAH, vol. 11 (1936), chap. 21.

that has identified *ius gentium* since the Renaissance with *international law*.

The quotations, isolated fragments as they are, give a fairly clear impression of the transformation that the older Stoic ideas underwent in the period. The idea of the cosmopolis as late as the time of Cicero was ■ shell empty of institutional content; single human individuals were its members by virtue of their participation in the logos. Cicero had brought the identification of world order with Rome. Then the identification of the law of nature shifted from Rome to the institutions that are common to *all* nations. And, ultimately, the law common to all nations was discovered to be not quite as ideal ■■ it should be, and it was put consequently in opposition to another law of nature that is free of the less desirable elements of *ius gentium*. The most important step in this evolution is the discovery of the *gentes* as the cause of imperfection in the world. The discovery in the sphere of Roman law runs parallel to the discovery of nations, *ta ethne*, as the obstacle in the path of ■ universal Christian order by Saint Paul. The national and civilizational diversification of mankind is in itself an imperfection; man ■■ we know him historically is a fallen creature, fallen from ■ state of innocence in which all men were equal as living beings.

#### *d. Seneca's Critique of Civilization*

The law of nature in opposition to the law of the *gentes* implies a critique of civilization. The critique had found expression, independent of the context of legal terminology, in Seneca's conception of the golden age ■■ a state of innocence from which man had fallen through his inventiveness and acquisitiveness.<sup>2</sup> The symbols are inherited from Hesiod, but the setting of the myth has changed. The Hesiodian golden age reflects the tensions of the Hellenic polis; the golden age of Seneca reflects the tensions of the Roman-Hellenistic world civilization. Seneca's lengthy reveling in the pleasures of primitive, precivilizational life, his detailed critique of the benefits of civilizational comforts, his symbolization of the two ideals of life in the persons of Diogenes, the wise man without wants, and of Daedalus, the low mind who wants to improve the material environment, create ■ new anticivilizational myth of nature that

2. Seneca, *Epistulae Morales*, ed. Otto Hense (Leipzig, 1914), epistula XC.

recurs in history when the malaise of civilization reappears, as in the sentiments of Rousseau.

### *e. The Relation of the Stoic Theory to the Christian*

The critique of civilization, combined with the idea that the diversification of mankind into the historical nations is the cause of imperfection, gives the complete pattern of legal theory under late Stoic influence. The cosmopolite visions of Diogenes and Zeno had been a new hope for men when the polis failed; now, when the *gentes* appeared as the insuperable obstacle to the realization of the world order, the idea of the egalitarian order had receded into the myth of the golden age. The myth of the cosmopolis had spent its force. The last great Stoics, typically represented by Marcus Aurelius, were solitary individuals; no evocative will was visible that could have led to the foundation of a community (setting aside the hope of Marcus in the "rising sun" of Commodus). We have to realize this state of things in its full import because historians frequently hold erroneous views concerning the relations between Stoicism and Christianity. The Christian patristic literature is strongly influenced by Stoic theories, as we shall see presently; so strongly that for certain aspects of early Christian theory of law one may flatly say that the Stoic positions have been simply taken over. The Stoic ideas of the golden age and the civilizational order were closely parallel to the Christian ideas of mankind before and after the Fall. Christian thinkers could build the Stoic theory into the Christian system without difficulty. To conclude from this relation, however, that early Christianity has not contributed much to the theory of politics and law, and that history would have taken, as far as political theory is concerned, much the same course without Christianity, is a gigantic misunderstanding, for Christianity had precisely what Stoicism had not: a new evocative idea, the idea of the kingdom of God under the royal priesthood of Christ. Stoicism had arrived at a dead end; the community idea of Christianity was the force that determined the future.

## §3. The Christian Theory of Law

### *a. Christological Variations*

The patristic literature on law does not present a uniform body of doctrine but reflects in rich variety the Christological positions

as well as the different interpretations of the phases of history. A passage from Tertullian may serve as an example: "Justice was first in a primitive state, fearing God by nature, then it moved on to infancy through the law and the prophets, then it flared up into youth through the Gospel, and now it had settled down to maturity through the Paraclete."<sup>3</sup> The phases of the right order are determined by a combination of the Pauline tripartite division of the law into gentile-natural, Mosaic and Christian, with the Montanist appearance of the Paraclete. We have to omit varieties of this kind in this context and confine ourselves to a line of theory that leads into the main medieval tradition.

### *b. The Reception of Stoic Theory*

The reception of Stoic ethical and legal doctrine became advisable and even necessary because Christianity had to fix its relations to the "world" in which it spread; the reception became possible through the association of the Stoic world logos with the Christian logos incarnate in Christ. The idea of the logos has, therefore, in Christianity a double function which is less important, though not absent, in Stoicism proper. In Christian doctrine the logos is (1) Christ, the divine substance of the Christian Community, and (2) Divine Reason, which operates in all men directing them toward right and averting them from wrong.<sup>4</sup> In the Christian context only the Ten Commandments and the Evangelical Councils as expressions of Divine Reason had to be added to the Stoic moral natural law.<sup>5</sup>

The reception could not be quite smooth, however, for the above-mentioned reason that the Christian kingdom of Heaven was an active, aggressive community, while the Stoic cosmopolis had simmered down to a relatively inactive concern about the imperfections of Roman civilization. For the Christian thinker the problem of law presented itself as the problem of the relation between the kingdom of God (for all practical purposes: the Church) and the

3. Tertullian, *De virginibus velandis* (Migne, P.L., II), chap. 1.

4. See the complete acceptance of the Ciceronian *recta ratio* in Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones*, book II, chap. 6, §8.

5. See for the fusion of the law of nature with the Mosaic and Christian law, for instance, the above quoted passage of Tertullian; or Ambrosius, *Commentaria in Epistolam ad Romanos* (Migne, P.L., XVII), chap. 3, 20: "This is, therefore, the law of nature which was by Moses partly reformed, partly by his authority confirmed."

sphere of law that was identified with the "world" (and that meant in practice the Roman empire). The relation with the world was fixed in its outlines by the Pauline prescriptions that the Christian had to obey the worldly authorities because they were ordained by God, but, on the other hand, he had to obey God more than men. This fundamental problem led in the patristic literature to a variety of positions with regard to the idea of natural law not all compatible with each other.

### *c. The Trend toward Deification of the Positive Order*

In a first position the natural law emanating from divine reason could be understood as a standard by which the actual order had to be measured. The actual order was good insofar as it coincided with natural law, and to this extent it had to be obeyed implicitly. Origen found the formula: "One may obey the laws of the state only when they agree with the divine Law; when, however, the written law or the state command something other than the Divine and Natural law, then we must ignore the commands of the state and obey the command of God alone."<sup>6</sup> This position assumes the discrepancy between natural law and positive law to be one not of principle but of accident. The "bad" elements could be eliminated, and the state was a sphere of potentially divine law. In the time after Constantine, when the empire had become Christian, this trend of theory came close to a deification of the state sphere as being a field of divine law once certain flaws were removed. I think we can trace in this trend the prevalent influence of Ciceronian theory.

### *d. The Trend toward Condemnation of the Positive Order*

A radical deification of the positive law would have conflicted, however, with the logic of Christian sentiment. The basic Christian experience of the gulf between the law of love and the harshness and compulsory character of the world diverted the construction of law in a direction that came closer to the theory of Seneca. The paradisiacal state of mankind before the Fall could be identified with Seneca's golden age, and the subsequent imperfection could be

6. See for this passage Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches* (New York, 1931), 151 and, for further materials and bibliography, n. 73.



understood as caused by the Fall. The institutions of the actual order that were incompatible with the paradisiacal natural law were due to Original Sin. While the trend toward deification of the worldly order went too far on the one side, the assumption of Original Sin and human wickedness as the exclusive source of undesirable institutions went too far on the other side and would have made any compromise with the world of sin extremely difficult. The way out of the dilemma was indicated by elements in the theory of Seneca that qualified somewhat the simple sequence of a natural state of innocence and a civilized state of imperfection.

*e. The Compromise—The Relative Natural Law*

In the pattern of the simple sequence, the golden age would be the state of natural law, the civilized stage that of positive imperfect law. The transition from one to the other is caused by the viciousness and acquisitiveness of man. This romantic picture of the *Epistula XC* is rectified by Seneca on other occasions, particularly in *De Tranquillitate Animi*,<sup>7</sup> through the introduction of the idea that the coercive institutions of government are not simply bad, but contain the remedy for the evils of human nature. The nature of man being what it is, the compulsory organization of society is the proper instrument for making the life of man livable at all and raising it to its highest possible ethical level. From this position, the church fathers could develop the theory (which is perhaps best in keeping with the Pauline tradition of considering governmental authority as a divine instrument for the punishment of worldly evil) that the order of the world, while being a consequence of the Fall, is at the same time ordained by God as a punitive and remedial institution. The conception of an absolute natural law that governs the primitive state of man can thus be supplemented by the idea of a relative natural law, also ordained by God, which governs the fallen state of man. The idea of the relative natural law of fallen man can be traced from Irenaeus through Ambrosius, Augustine, and Gregory the Great to Isidore of Seville as the dominant conception of natural law that was transmitted to the Middle Ages.<sup>8</sup>

7. Seneca, *Dialogorum Libri XII*, ed. Emil Hermes (Leipzig, 1915), bk. IX: *De tranquillitate Animi*.

8. In presenting the three positions, I follow closely the analysis of Troeltsch, *Social Teachings*, 150–55. For the ample presentation of materials see R. W. Carlyle

*f. Imperial Authority—Lex Regia and Divine Authority*

A special problem within the theory of law is presented by the ideas concerning the foundations of imperial authority. It is more cautious to speak of imperial authority rather than of governmental authority at large, because the only authority in question was that of the emperor. However general the formulas may have been, and however far the generalizations on the basis of these formulas may have gone in later periods, it would be an anachronism to see the theory of the early Christian centuries in any light other than that of the specific relations between the Church and the Roman emperor. These relations did not lend themselves, for the rest, to a consistent rationalization; the theory, if we want to call it by that name, remained in a state of suspense between several possible solutions.

The assumption of a relative natural law that governs the world of fallen man and can serve as a standard for the positive enactments of imperial law would lead logically to the conclusion that the authority of the emperor was exerted rightly when his enactments were in agreement with the remedial function of the law. The actual fulfillment of the *cura et tutela*, of the protective function of the emperor for the people, was to be the criterion for the legitimacy of his position. The *lex regia* of the Roman law offered the symbolism in which an idea of this kind could be couched; and we find actually in the legislation of Justinian considerable stress laid on the transfer of power from the *populus Romanus* to the emperor (*Cod. Iust.* I.17.1, 7). It is, however, doubtful whether this reference to the *lex regia* could be, in the sixth century, much more than a hieroglyph, an antiquarian ornament for the imperial power, for we find in the same rescript, as well as in other passages, an idea more in keeping with the actual situation, the idea of the derivation of imperial authority from God. One of the *Novellae* (*Nov.* 4) contains even the Hellenistic formula of the *basileus* as the *nomos empsychos*, the animated law, that God has given to men.

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and A. J. Carlyle, *A History of Medieval Political Theory in the West*, vol. 1, *From the Roman Lawyers of the Second Century to the Political Writers of the Ninth*. The *History* of the Carlyles is a valuable register to the literature; it should be noted, however, that the presentation is seriously handicapped by the insistence on organizing the materials under the categories of constitutional government, categories that were not quite as important to the fathers as they are to us. The proportions of the problems are severely distorted by this approach.

The same suspense of theory is characteristic of the church fathers. The democratic idea of a transfer of power from the people to the ruler appears occasionally, but the main line tended toward the divine derivation of imperial authority. The situation remained the same through the Middle Ages. In later medieval theory the *lex regia* could be pulled out of the storehouse of hieroglyphs by ecclesiastics in order to create some ideological trouble for the emperor, but a straightforward connection between royal authority and the quality of the law that the ruler enacted was established only by Calvinism under the influence of the Israelitic idea of the *berith*, the covenant of the people with God and the king. The foundation of authority on the observance of natural law would have led logically to the same problem as in the sixteenth century, the problem of deposition of the ruler by popular action, an idea inconceivable in the early Christian situation when the very existence of the Church was dependent on the goodwill of the emperor. Preference was given, for instance by Augustine, to the idea that even the tyrannical emperor had to be obeyed because he was ordained by God; an emperor could be given not only by the grace of God, but also by the wrath of God as punishment for sin.

Whenever the limitation of imperial power by reference to the natural law proved ineffective, the idea developed of limiting [imperial authority] in spiritual matters by the Church herself. The complete submission to the emperor in temporal affairs went alongside the assertion of spiritual authority, following the idea that the function of the "world," of temporal power and natural law, is none other in the Christian system than to furnish the natural existential basis for a community of believers whose ultimate aim is the sanctification of life. The great early symbol of the assertion of spiritual authority is the scene between Saint Ambrose and the Emperor Theodosius when the bishop excluded the emperor from the celebration of the Eucharist because of the massacre in Thessalonica for which the emperor was responsible.



## Saint Augustine

### §1. The Man

Aurelius Augustinus (354–430) is one of the great epochal figures of mankind. His life and work summarize the four centuries of the Roman-Christian age and mark its end; and his work, being the *summa* of the age that has laid the foundation of Western Christian civilization, has remained the foundation of Christian thought to this day, for Catholicism as well as for Protestantism, through its influence on Luther and Calvin. The amplitude of the work is determined by the amplitude of the personality. Augustine's intensely religious soul could venture into a variety of experiences without losing itself. His spiritual wanderings led from Roman paganism, through Manichaeism and Neoplatonism, to Catholicism, absorbing on the way strong influences from African Donatism. But though the conversion to Catholicism was the great turning point in his life, the earlier phases did not recede into the shadow of a prehistory: in the work of the Catholic Augustine the Roman, the Manichaean, the Platonist, and the Donatist are all still present. The internal historical coherence of his life was clear and strong: in his *Confessions* he gave the first spiritual autobiography of our world. His religiousness, however, was not sensuous. The strength of his spiritual emotion was equaled by his metaphysical genius: the most intimate description of the *intentio animi* toward God does not indulge in imagery or lyricism, but is almost dry in its intellectual chasteness and in the conceptual rigidity of the mystical ascent to the *conspectus Dei*. The burning temperament, for which Miguel de Unamuno has claimed Augustine's Africanism as the source, expresses itself only in the emotional lucidity and

the rhythm of his language. The combination of these two factors alone would have made Augustine the great intellectual mystic, the metaphysician, and the theologian. His political will, added to his intellectual and spiritual powers, enabled him to penetrate the political and historical problems of the age in all their complications. The absorption of this vast political material and the apologetic intention in its presentation have, however, damaged the consistency of the metaphysical system to a certain extent, as critics have rightly remarked; the *Civitas Dei* has become so closely linked to the [historical] situation that the *philosophy* of history and politics has turned almost into a sociological *critique* of the Roman-Christian civilization, the receptive-fatalistic sentiment outweighing the will to spiritual order. But whatever the *civitas Dei* has suffered as the system of Christian politics it has gained as the grandiose expression of Christian political existence. One cannot expect that the man of the *Confessions*, who is fascinated by the historical growth of his own life, will free himself of the intimate structure of his personality and not be deeply impressed by the determinants of the political situation as they have grown historically.

## §2. The Situation

### a. *The Emperors and the Church*

By the time of Augustine, Christian history had evolved along lines rather different from those envisaged in the imperial idea of Paul. The revealed kingdom of Heaven had progressed stupendously, but by no means to the extent that it could have absorbed paganism. The main phases in the struggle can be distinguished: first, the period of increasing persecution since the Antonines and Severi, reaching its first climax under Decius, its second under Diocletian. A reversal, then, of the persecution policy began under Constantine, with the Toleration Edict of Milan in 313.<sup>1</sup> The new policy did not imply, however, a spiritual domination of the empire by the victorious Great Church. By the time of Constantine the internal ethnic differentiation of Christianity had gone a long way and the

1. Concerning the question of whether there ever was an Edict of Milan, or whether the term is a symbol expressing the result of a series of acts, see N. H. Baynes, *Constantine*, CAH, vol. 12 (1939), chap. 20, and the further literature quoted there.

community was torn by the first Eastern Christological heresies and by the Western disciplinarian schisms. Any hopes that Constantine may have entertained of finding in the small but active Christian community (about 10 percent of the population) the common spiritual basis for the absolute monarchy that had emerged from the constitutional reforms of Diocletian were bound to meet with disappointment. Constantine himself already had Arian leanings, his son Constantius started an outright Arian oppression of the Great Church, while the second successor, Julian the Apostate (361-363), attempted a revival of paganism and its organization in a rival pagan church. The following emperors favored Arianism, and only with Gratian (375-383) in the West and Theodosius the Great (379-395) in the East did the orthodox Great Church again reach ascendancy. The emperors can hardly be blamed for their vacillations, for the hierarchies of the Church, bickering about the dogma and fighting for spoils, were indeed not an edifying spectacle and certainly not of much help in the solution of the problems of empire. The idea of the emperor itself did not, therefore, evolve in a straight Christian direction. There had been the momentous event of the divine inspiration of Constantine before the battle at the Milvian Bridge, 312 A.D., but this tendency toward a personal Christian divine inspiration of the emperor on the occasion of great decisions did not evolve. The emperor remained the *pontifex maximus* of the pagan empire, and when Ambrosius had persuaded Gratian in 382 to give up the title, the pagan-divine authority of the emperor was not dead: we have seen the emperor as the Hellenistic *nomos empsychos* even in the legislation of Justinian.

### *b. Disciplinarian Schisms in the Western Church*

To make the situation worse, the Western Church had been torn by disciplinarian schisms as a consequence of the persecutions from Decius to Diocletian. The splits arose over the question of the readmission into the community of those Christians who, under the threat of dire consequences, had offered pagan sacrifice. The rigorists, Novatians in Rome and Donatists in Africa, insisted on ■ pure church of the elect, while the Great Church was in favor of leniency. The Donatists in Africa had gained the ascendancy over the main church, and their doctrine of an invisible spiritual church uniting the true Christians, as against ■ *corpus diaboli*

uniting the wicked, strongly influenced Augustine, as we shall see below.

### c. *The Sack of Rome*

The final blow that threatened to annihilate the Church in a wave of resentment of the pagan world came with the increasing pressure of the Germanic tribes on the empire and the sack of Rome by Alaric in 410 A.D. The conquest of the symbol of Roman eternity by the barbarians had wide repercussions in popular sentiment, the pagans naturally branding the Christianization of the empire as the cause of the disaster, the Christians being deeply perturbed by the fact that even Christianization could not avert it. In this situation, after 410, Augustine began to write his treatise *De civitate Dei contra Paganos*, completing it by 426, as a political disquisition, intended to refute the popular arguments concerning the guilt or helplessness of Christianity in the face of the catastrophe.<sup>2</sup>

## §3. Symbolic History

### a. *Platonic Symbolism in the Civitas Dei*

The great treatise began as an *oeuvre de circonstance*: books I–III appeared first as a political pamphlet to deal with the misunderstanding that Christianity was some kind of insurance against disaster. In spite of being occasioned by particular circumstances, the whole work is organized according to plan and reflects the Platonism of Augustine in a surprising way. Augustine himself has explained the organization of the work in his *Retractationes* II.43. The first part, comprising books I–X, is a defense of Christianity against the pagan charges, the second part, consisting of books XI–XXII, is a constructive discussion of a Christian system of politics. The first part is subdivided into books I–V, arguing that the pagan gods do not contribute anything to earthly happiness, and books VI–X, arguing that they do not bring salvation in afterlife. The second part is subdivided into groups of four books discussing the origins of the *civitas Dei* and the *civitas terrena*, the earthly course of the two, and the end of history. The construction is a symbolic play

2. The edition used is B. Dombart's *S. Aurelii Augustini de Civitate Dei*, 3 vols. (Leipzig, 1877). An important monograph on Saint Augustine is Erich Przywara, S.J., *Augustinus* (Leipzig, 1934).

with Platonic numbers. The ten books of the *Republic* are followed by the twelve books of the *Laws*; the subdivisions are two times five and three times four. The integers are assembled whose proportions render the basic cosmic-musical relations of the polis of the *Laws*. We called the number relations a symbolic play, but it should not be taken too lightly. Certainly it concerns only the organization of a treatise, but it is a symptom of Augustine's powers of symbolic evocation.

### *b. The Construction of Epochs*

The great general problem of Christian politics is, since the Epistle to the Hebrews, the construction of world history. Christian politics is inseparable from the consciousness of the epoch created through the appearance of Christ, and from the idea that the history of mankind leading up to his appearance followed a plan of divine providence. Pre-Christian politics is concerned with individual peoples and their respective myths; the nations live, as it were, in watertight mythical compartments and the idea even of history as the meaningful course of mankind is inconceivable, notwithstanding high technical achievements of historiography within the separate units. In the Christian system the fundamental political question for every community has become: where do we stand with regard to the whole course of human history? And this question has remained the fundamental Western question even in the secularized derivative political system, be it the Enlightenment idea of human progress tending toward constitutional government as the apex of achievement or the Third Realm ideas of Communism and National Socialism.

### *c. The Augustinian Construction of Sacred History*

In the *Civitas Dei*, Augustine has summarized in a new system the earlier attempts at a symbolic periodization of human history. Periodizations of this type, using the myth of world creation as the pattern of construction, can be found as early as the second century. The *Epistle of Barnabas*<sup>3</sup> assumes six ages of the world in analogy with the six days in which God created the world, followed by the

3. Dated between 110 and 135 A.D., of unknown authorship, probably coming from the Church of Alexandria.



eternal Sabbath. Every one of these ages lasts one thousand years, the duration of the world thus being calculated at six thousand years. It is impossible to establish the origin of the figures precisely; when we go further back we are lost in the welter of Asiatic number symbolisms. An immediate contact of the Barnabas figure with the Christian tradition is established through 2 Pet. 3:8, where the passage from Psalm 90 is quoted that before the Lord ten thousand years are like a day; but the total of six thousand years may also have the background of rabbinical tradition according to which the world lasts two thousand years before the Torah, two thousand years after the Torah, and two thousand years under the Messiah; and obviously the Persian six-thousand-year cycle may have something to do with it. Augustine has the six ages of the world as the analogue of creation, but he does not accept a mechanical number of years for the single periods. He correlates the history of the world with the life of Christ and divides the periods by the generations of the ancestors of Jesus: from Adam to Noah, to Abraham, to David, to the Exile, to Christ, and finally, the time since the coming of Christ. The first two periods have ten generations each, the third, fourth, and fifth have fourteen generations each, the sixth age is indeterminate.<sup>4</sup> The reserve with regard to the length of the last age was caused by the unhappy experience with age calculations in the periodization of the Donatist Tyconius. Tyconius had calculated, on the basis of the Apocalypse, that the suffering of the true Church (the Donatist Church in Africa) would last three hundred and fifty years, which would bring the end of the world in 381. The year came and went and the world kept going on. The mistake of calculating the last age in a definite short term was made again in German and Italian theory, in the time of Joachim of Flora [which relied heavily on symbolism], discrediting the metaphysical importance of the symbolism. The third symbolic strain, interwoven with the other two, is the characterization of the ages as an analogue of the phases of human life. The six ages of the world correspond to the human periods of *infantia*, *pueritia*, *adolescentia*, *iuventus*, *aetas senior*, and *senectus* (infancy, childhood, adolescence, youth, mature age, and old age). The present age is the age of senescence, the *saeculum senescens*; the world is growing old. This feeling of

4. The first presentation of this system is to be found in an early work of Augustine, 389 A.D., the *De genesi contra Manichaeos*, bk. I, chap. 23-24.

aging and tending toward an inevitable end, caused by the spectacle of disintegration in the surrounding world, lies like a blight over the philosophy of Augustine. It remained the prevalent Christian sentiment in the following centuries. It expressed itself strongly in Gregory the Great (590–604), who witnessed the crumbling of the empire, and it reached deep into the Middle Ages.

#### d. *The Senescens Saeculum*

The systematic importance of Augustinian symbolism can be scarcely overrated. The elements of the system were furnished by tradition, but their organization is Augustine's own. The epochal division of history into the periods before Christ and after Christ is elaborated into an analogue of world creation. The world of politics has found again its parameters of order in the cosmos, as in the Mesopotamian evocations. But it is no longer the cosmos of celestial revolutions, returning to the original constellations and thus creating the aeons, but the cosmos as the work of God according to his plan. Hence the analogue of the cosmos can furnish a meaningful line of evolution, the ahistorical element of the cyclical revolutions being eliminated. The analogue can be carried over into the Christian constitution of the epochs by means of the ancestor line of Christ, and it can be carried over into the world of man by the symbolism of the human ages. God, Christ, and man are thus linked into a firm system of meaning. The construction has only one weak point, but one of decisive importance: the history of the Christian world has no structure of its own. After the appearance of Christ, history simply goes on having no *internal* aim until at some unknown point of time the aimless course is cut short by the second appearance of Christ, an appearance that, as far as the internal structure of the Christian community life is concerned, might come today as well as tomorrow or in a thousand years. The history of Augustine is not constructive action looking to the future; five ages of history have passed, the sixth, the *senescens saeculum* of the crumbling world, holds no hope beyond its end except for the heavenly peace, the *pax coelestis*. The position of Augustine at the end of the ancient world is in this respect parallel to that of Hegel at the end of the age of the national state: when the Idea has evolved through thesis and antithesis to the synthesis in the objective morality of the state in the present, we stand at

the precipice of history; the dynamics of history is spent, and we look over the border of the world into nothingness. What comes, of course, is not nothingness but ■ crisis pregnant with ■ new future.

#### §4. The *Civitas Dei*

##### *a. The Tyconian Theory of the Invisible Church and the Corpus Diaboli*

The argument concerning the *civitas Dei*, the city of God, arises out of the question whether there is any enduring dominion considering that even the Roman empire showed signs of going the way of other empires. The answer is, that there is an eternal city, the city of God. Augustine's conception of the *civitas Dei* has sometimes been called inconsistent or vague; it is neither the one nor the other, but it is complicated. We approach it best not by ■ definition, but by the elucidation of the problem that it intends to solve, following in this procedure the guidance of Alois Dempf.<sup>5</sup>

The idea of Augustine is closely related with that of Tyconius mentioned earlier. The rigoristic Donatist sect had found in Tyconius its theorist. The Donatist Church was the true church, according to the Tyconian theory, while the main church, which admitted the fallen brethren, stood outside the true church just as did the pagans. Tyconius went even further and admitted that within the true church there were imperfect members who did not actually participate in the spiritual *corpus mysticum* of the saints. Within the visible true church, there was, therefore, an invisible spiritual church of the perfect Christians (an idea that was again developed in the Reformation period by Luther). This invisible church was the true *civitas Dei*, while the false brethren, the *separati* of the main church and the pagans, belonged to another unit, the *civitas diaboli*, the city of the devil.<sup>6</sup> The theory of Tyconius contained ■ profound truth insofar as it stressed the spiritual character of the true Christian community, but in its rigoristic construction it violated the rule of Christian love that would allow the Church to be ■ *corpus mixtum*, a mystical body composed of healthy and less healthy members.

5. Dempf, *Sacrum Imperium*, pt. 2, chap. 3.

6. For the theory of Tyconius ■ Traugott Hahn, *Tyconius-Studien: Ein Beitrag zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte des vierten Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig, 1900), and Dempf, *Sacrum Imperium*, 120 ff.

### b. *The Augustinian Civitas Dei and Civitas Terrena*

Augustine did not follow Tyconius in the construction of a church of the saints, or of an invisible church within the visible; he maintained the idea of the sacramental church against sectarian narrowness. He accepted, however, the problem thrown into sharp focus by Tyconius, and distinguished between the body of the elect, throughout the history of the world, and the earthly city, the *civitas terrena*, composed of the lost souls. History runs on a double plan: it is the sacred history of mankind expressed in the six symbolic ages, and it is the history of the good and the souls, beginning with the reign of God in the angel-state, going through the fall of the angels, the split between good and bad human souls, and ending in the reign of the righteous souls with Christ at the end of the world after the bad souls have been committed to eternal punishment. Neither the *civitas Dei* nor the *civitas terrena* can, therefore, be identified with any of the empirical institutions in history. The church remains the sacramental unit, embodying the elect along with the wicked; and the empire remains the empire. While the empire as such, the *res publica*, or the state has no specific relation with the *civitas terrena* (though actually a historical empire may fall—with all of its membership—into the earthly city), there is, nevertheless, a specific relation between the Church and the *civitas Dei*. The Church is not the *civitas Dei* itself, but it is its militant representative on earth in history. The Church is the kingdom of Christ *qualis nunc est* [as it is now], though not all members of the historical Church, *qualis nunc est*, will be members of the final Church, *qualis tunc erit* [as it will be then], when the tares are weeded out.<sup>7</sup>

By means of this construction Augustine preserved the world function of the Church, saving it from the fate of becoming a sect.

7. See particularly *Civitas Dei*, XX.9. Professor F. J. C. Hearnshaw's interpretation of this passage (that Augustine had identified in it the historical Church with the *civitas Dei*) in his "St. Augustine and the City of God," in *Some Great Political Idealists of the Christian Era* (London, 1937), 16, is a regrettable misunderstanding of a perfectly clear text. In this case, as in many others, the inconsistencies attributed to Augustine would probably disappear after a more careful reading. Another Augustinian "inconsistency" of this kind is to be found on the same p. 16 of Professor Hearnshaw's essay. Hearnshaw finds that in the earlier quoted passage of *Retract* II.43 Augustine uses the term *civitas Dei* synonymously with "Christian religion." A reading of the passage in question reveals that Augustine states that on the occasion of the attacks on the "Christian religion" after the sack of Rome he wrote his *Civitas Dei*. To interpret this statement as a "synonymous" use of the two terms seems slightly arbitrary.

### c. *Membership in the Civitas Dei*

The *civitas Dei* is a transcendental community not to be identified with any historic institution; its membership is selected individually by God, not by men. The most concise formula of the qualifications of membership in either the earthly or heavenly city is given in *Civitas Dei* XIV.28: "The two types of love constitute the two cities: the love of self (*amor sui*) to the degree of contempt of God, the earthly; the love of God (*amor Dei*) to the degree of contempt of self, the heavenly. Therefore the one glories in itself, the other in the Lord. For the one seeks glory before men; to the other God who knows conscience is the highest glory. In the one the rulers as well as the subjected nations are possessed by the passion (*libido*) of domination; in the other there is a mutual service of love, on the part of the magistrates (*praepositi*) through counsel, on the part of the subjects (*subditi*) through obedience."<sup>8</sup> The description is couched in terms of spiritual characteristics, but it is not to be understood as an essay in characterology. The differences of spiritual character that make for membership in one or the other of the two cities are due to an eternal plan of God, who selects some of the fallen men as receptacles of his grace and gives them the strength to rise from the *amor sui* to the *amor Dei*.

### d. *The Problem of Predestination*

The coexistence of the omnipotence of God with the free will of man, and of the benevolence of God with his selection of some for salvation and others for damnation, is the fundamental mystery of Christianity; it is not capable of any rational solution, and the *theologumena* concerning it cannot do more than shift the accents between the poles of the problem. The theological problem as such does not interest us here, but the variations of accents are relevant for the conception of the Christian community. We have to note, therefore, the distinct shift of accent from the Pauline idea of the community to the Augustinian *civitas Dei*. The doctrine of predestination is not missing in Paul (see Rom. 8), but the accent lies with

8. The description of the two types of men, and particularly of the earthly type, uses a language strongly suggestive of the later Hobbesian description of the "pride" of power, "glorying" in one's self, etc., of the seventeenth-century man after his release from the spiritual shelter of the *sacrum imperium*. I have not found any reference to this parallel, and I do not know whether it is due to elements of tradition or simply to a situation parallel. In either case the question seems to be worth a closer investigation. See also the chapter on John of Salisbury [herein, vol. II, chap. 6].

Paul clearly on the justification of the human soul through faith. The call to enter the kingdom of Heaven goes to all men; all bear within their souls the image of their true self, and it can be made active by responding to the call of the Savior. *Metanoia* is a general human possibility; those who do not follow the call have to bear the responsibility for their callousness. Paul is actively engaged in his imperial enterprise of creating the Christian community; the freedom of the children of God to embody themselves through faith in the *corpus mysticum* carries the accents in his attitude. Augustine, on the other hand, has said the revealing word: "I would not believe the Gospel, if I were not moved by the authority of the Church."<sup>9</sup> The Church is the given framework, and while the Pauline freedom of the soul is not abolished (because it would be difficult to eliminate it without destroying Christianity), the scene has changed from history as it appears to man who creates it through his acts, to history as it appears to God who knows its course in advance. The same cloud of fatality that hovers over the sacred history of the Church hovers over the *civitas Dei* and its predestined members. The great spontaneity of Paul is lost. The description of the fallen member of the earthly city in terms of *amor sui* betrays Augustine's experience of human nature as demonic, an experience partly, no doubt, resulting from introspection, but also from the spectacle of the surrounding disintegrating world. The cleavage between pagans and Christians as well as schisms within the Church itself were persuasive facts, showing the incurable differentiation of mankind into the saved and the lost.

## §5. Theory of the Republic

### a. *The Nonspiritual Community Spheres*

What makes the theory of Augustine so complicated is the division between a transcendental spiritual history of souls and the empirical spiritual history of mankind in the course of the six ages. The two levels of history are linked through the function of the visible Church representing the transcendental spiritual realm of the good souls. As yet, however, neither of these two lines of theory has touched on the sphere of the nonspiritual community of man, for

9. Augustinus, *Contra Epistolam Manichaei*, chap. 5: "Ego vero Evangelio non crederem, nisi me catholicae Ecclesiae commoveret auctoritas." *Opera Omnia* [Migne, VIII].

which Augustine uses the terms *civitas*, *res publica*, or *regnum*, all of which are usually, but rather imperfectly, rendered by our modern word *state*. The term *state* is inadequate, because in modern usage it signifies a sphere of organization, legal order, and power that is ideologically independent of the spiritual organization of mankind in the churches. The Christian system of politics in general, and that of Augustine in particular, on the contrary conceives of the sphere of power and law as a realm that is intimately connected with the spiritual sphere, though its foundations are natural. Our modern distinction of "politics" and "religion" has no place in the Augustinian system, and any attempt to discover Augustine's theory of the "state" can only lead to a severe misunderstanding.<sup>10</sup> I prefer to speak, therefore, of the theory of the *res publica*, the republic, because Augustine takes the Ciceronian theory as his starting point.

### *b. The Critique of the Ciceronian Conception of the People*

The Ciceronian definitions of the people and the republic proved useless in the Christian system because they were built, as we have seen, on the assumption that a search for spiritual order was unnecessary; the problems of government were solved by identifying the Stoic conceptions of the world state and the world *nomos* with the vocabulary of the Roman republic. A refreshing trait of Augustine's theory of government, a trait that is not always sufficiently appreciated, is the ruthlessness with which he shakes up the complacent aggregate of Ciceronian hieroglyphs and replaces it again by realistic problems. He considers the Ciceronian equation between *res publica* and *res populi* and finds that there never could have been a Roman *res publica* if we accept the equation because there never was a Roman people in the strict sense of the Ciceronian definition of the "people." The people is, according to Cicero, a multitude held together *consensu iuris*, by the consent to a right order, so that the existence of a people would depend on its being organized in a "right order." But, Augustine asks, how can there be a *ius*, a right order,

10. A good example of such a misunderstanding is Carlyle's presentation of Augustine's theory of the republic in his *History of Medieval Political Theory in the West*, vol. 1. See Professor McIlwain's criticism of the presentations of Carlyle and Figgis in his *Growth of Political Thought in the West* (New York, 1932).

without justice? And how can there be justice if not everybody receives his due? And God did not receive his due in a republic that submitted to demons. At last the Socratic-Platonic problem is reestablished on the Christian level; justice is not a mere word anymore, as with Cicero, used to cover any legal order however unjust it may be in substance, but has again become a standard by which the content of an order is to be measured. A realm may have a legal order, and the government may have the power to enforce it, even observing correct procedure, but what is such a realm but a *latrocinium* [band of robbers], if justice is missing? (IV.4). When the whole people do not live in the faith (*ex fide*) like a single just man who loves God as God should be loved and loves his neighbor like himself, there is no justice. If, therefore, we define the *res publica* as the *res populi*, and the people as a multitude united *consensu iuris*, then Rome was no republic because it had no people (XIX.23).

### c. The Augustinian Conception of the People

The result compels a revision of the Ciceronian definition of a people. It obviously does not make sense to deny the existence of the Roman people or the Roman republic; a definition has to be found that fits the realities of the pagan world. The break with the Ciceronian mechanical identification of justice with the Roman order opens the way to the understanding of the prelegal existence of the people. A people "is a group of rational beings, bound together by the harmonious common possession (*concordi comunione*) of the things which they love" (XIX.24). The people are primarily not a legal but a civilizational unit, and the quality of the unit is to be measured by the "things which they love," that is by the civilizational values prevalent among them. This definition makes it possible to recognize a group, though it has not reached the level of Christian justice, as a people and to appreciate it in its true value. The Roman people, for instance, though pagan and belonging to the *civitas terrena*, embodied in the opinion of Augustine such high virtues that God found them worthy of having Christianity originate in its midst.

### d. The Reopening of Theoretical Problems

Augustine's break with the Ciceronian hieroglyphs reopened the realistic discussion of political problems. The tradition of the



Ciceronian myths of law and government was not dead, but it had become distinctly ■ sideline in Western thought. When it came to the fore again, as in the seventeenth-century theory of natural law, its reign was brief and never uncontested. Augustine's attack on the Ciceronian position followed two main lines. He voiced the protest of the spirit against the complacent covering of governmental iniquities by legal vocabulary; he made it plain that ■ well-functioning legal order may be unjust. And he voiced the protest of the empiricist against any attempt at constructing a people out of mere legal forms. As the theoretical result we may summarize that the people and its civilization ■■ one thing, the legal organization of the people another, and the spirit of justice a third.

The reopening of the problems of politics expressed itself in the work of Augustine in the wealth of topics that he took into consideration. The first topic that dominates the theory of Augustine is *peace* as the measure of all social order and its proper aim. The Christian idea of eternal peace, the *pax aeterna*, in the *civitas Dei* at the end of the world is the regulative principle of all society (XIX.11). The introduction of the variety of empirical institutions has made it possible, however, for Augustine to follow the topic of peace through its variations in the imperfect empirical social groupings. Peace is the aim of the animal world ■ well ■ of family order. It is the aim of the polis, of the empire, and of the whole world (XIX.12-14). Domestic peace is the desire of man, even when he is externally at war; peace within the group is the desire even of the "band of robbers"; peace for the enjoyment of earthly pleasures is the aim of groupings in the *civitas terrena*; and peace for the enjoyment of the perfect beatitude is the aim of the *civitas Dei*, so that the terms of *pax in vita aeterna* (peace in the life eternal) and *vita aeterna in pace* (eternal life in peace) become interchangeable (XII.11).

The second important element in this edifice is the recognition of national individualities. We have seen the empire since Cicero laying its iron rule over the *gentes*, blotting them out; and we have seen the *gentes* rising again ■■ the "disturbing" factor in the Christian theory as well as in the theory of the Roman lawyers. Augustine is the first to acknowledge again the right of the *gentes* to individual existence; he sees them as ethnic and civilizational personalities that should be raised spiritually to the level of Christianity but not be extinguished by the *magnum latrocinium* of an empire. Some

historians have gone so far as to see in Augustine the father of international law because he established the theory of the nations. If we take this claim with sufficient qualifications, we may admit that the Augustinian theory marks the beginning of the idea of a Christian community of nations, although there is a long way from the *gentes* of the migration period to the nations who emerged in the Renaissance. And finally we should mention as a topic of great later consequence the description of the ideal ruler in *Civitas Dei* V.24; Dempf calls the chapter the first *Mirror of the Prince*, marking it thus as the beginning of this medieval genus of literature.

## §6. Profane History—Orosius

### a. *The Problem of Profane History*

The system of the *Civitas Dei* is incomplete in one important point. Augustine had dealt with the transcendent history of the heavenly city; he had dealt with the sacred history of mankind in the six symbolic ages; and he had, finally, considered the relations of the spiritual sphere with the natural sphere of the *gentes*. He had not integrated, however, into his system the profane history of the *imperia* outside the Israelitic-Christian evolution. The task was fulfilled, at the command of Augustine, by his pupil Orosius. The *Historiae Adversum Paganos* of Orosius is a systemic part of the Augustinian philosophy of politics and history.<sup>11</sup>

The symbolic system of the sacred history as such did not offer any room for the vast materials of profane history, but the actual structure of events permitted a parallel organization of the sacred and profane materials in such a way that they could be linked at decisive epochs, such as the appearance of Christ. We have opened this part with a quotation from Melito of Sardes, referring to the coincidence of epoch between Christianity and the Roman imperial period. Links of this type form the framework of profane history also for Orosius. His periodization opens sacred history from Adam to Abraham. Abraham is considered the contemporary of Ninus, the Assyrian king, and with Ninus profane history begins. The second great sacred period, from Abraham to Jesus, is paralleled by the profane period from Ninus to Augustus (I.1). Particular emphasis

11. *Pauli Orosii Historiarum Adversum Paganos Libri VII*, ed. C. Zangemeister (Leipzig, 1889). An English translation was published by J. W. Raymond, *Seven Books of History against the Pagans* (New York, 1936).

is laid (VI.22) on the symbolic parallel between the closing of the temple of Janus under Augustus and the birth of Jesus with the announcement of peace to all men of goodwill.

*b. Periodization of Profane History since Daniel*

The internal periodization of profane history is derived, through various intermediaries, from the prophecies of Daniel. The pattern of the four-monarchy series of Daniel was elastic enough, ■■ we pointed out earlier, to make it adaptable to new situations. The monarchies of Daniel incorporated only the Oriental empire sequence, closing with the Macedonian monarchy ■■ the fourth. With the expansion of Rome to the east, the speculation on monarchies had to absorb the fact of the Roman empire; and it had, furthermore, to absorb the incipient independent eastern developments, and, with the disintegration of the Roman empire, the ethnic sentiments of the provinces. The course of speculative history was, therefore, not smooth; it shows clearly the irruptions of reality into the pattern of the straight line created by the apocalypse of Daniel. Above all, the end of the Macedonian Diadochic empires did not have the clear succession of Rome for its consequence. Rome inherited the Mediterranean, but in the east the Parthian and Sassanid dynasties reconstructed the Persian power. By the time of Augustus we find in the *Historiae Philippicae* of Pompeius Trogus a division of world history after the Macedonian fall into the two parallel lines of Parthian (bks. 41–42) and Roman (bk. 43) history. And we see, furthermore, provincial consciousness raising its head, introducing provincial histories as independent lines into the pattern. Trogus was ■ provincial, from Gallia Narbonensis, and books 43 and 44 of his *Historiae* give the histories of Gaul and Spain. The tendency toward the straight-line construction, however, prevailed. Decisive phases in this return to the straight evolution were the *Kanon Basileon* of Ptolemy, in the second century, which had the line of the Macedonian kings, ending with Cleopatra, followed by the Roman emperors from Augustus to Antoninus Pius, and the *Chronica* of Eusebius, in the fourth century, which established definitely the parallelism of the straight-line profane history with the straight-line sacred history. The Orient simply dropped out of the Western horizon, though Eastern power did not show any sign of decline.

### c. Orosius' Periodization of Profane History

In the *Historiae* of Orosius we can still discern the traces of some of the realistic disturbances. The Orient has receded, but African nationalism makes itself felt in the empire construction, as did the Gallic in Trogus. The four empires of Orosius are the Babylonian, the Macedonian, the African (Carthage), and the Roman. The organization of the material in this sequence had the advantage of permitting a cosmic analogue. Orosius dwells on the point that the four empires correspond to the four cardinal points of the world. He elaborates the symbolism even further by relating the two great empires, the Babylonian and the Roman, with the preferred east-west axis, while the minor Macedonian and African empires correspond to the minor north-south axis (II.1). The Augustinian power of symbolic construction is obviously strong in Orosius as well. Profane history found its myth again in the Mesopotamian tradition, as the sacred history of Augustine had discovered its own in the myth of creation.

### d. The Straight-Line Pattern of History

The materials of the profane differ from those of the sacred construction, but the two lines of symbols are not mutually independent. The straight evolution of sacred history predominates, and profane history is twisted to fit the sacred pattern. We have noted the irruptions of reality and their elimination by the straight-line sequence. The result had far-reaching consequences for the political theory of the Middle Ages as well ■■ for our modern interpretation of the Middle Ages up to this day. The just mentioned irruptions would have tended to break the sacred line and to introduce the principle of the *gentes*, of nations, already strongly pressing to the fore in Augustine, as the units determining the structure of history and politics. Since the irruption did not succeed it was impossible, for one thousand years after Augustine and Orosius, to arrive at an understanding of the events accompanying the fall of the Roman empire. The migration period [which led to barbarian incursions into Roman territory and eventually to the collapse of the Western Roman empire] was not seen as the great ethnic upheaval that it was; the sacred and profane constructions covered the break; and the rise of a new world on ■ new ethnic basis was glossed over as the continuation, with disturbances, of the old. Revealing for

this attitude is the last chapter of the *Historiae* of Orosius, where the author reports with visible satisfaction that Ataulf, king of the Visigoths, assumed the attitude of the *Romanae restitutionis auctor*, restorer of Rome, because he could not be her *immutator*, her destroyer. The pathos of the Roman *imperium* prevailed over the nations. The sentiment of Lactantius that the end of the world was not to be feared so long as Rome survived was still strong and remained strong into the interpretation of the migration empires [that emerged after the fall of Rome] and ultimately of the Holy Roman Empire ■■ heirs to Roman grandeur. Only in the Renaissance, when the rise of the nations awakened the consciousness of the ethnic, civilizational group ■■ ■ general determinant of history, a critical understanding of the end of the old and the beginning of ■ new Western world could be reached. But to this day the linear construction has not lost its force in popular sentiment.<sup>12</sup>

12. [Compare *Order and History*, vol. IV, *The Ecumenic Age* (Baton Rouge, 1974), introduction, section "Linear Time and Axis Time," 2–6, and chap. 1, "Historiogenesis," 59–113; "What Is History?" in *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin*, vol. 28, *What Is History? And Other Late Unpublished Writings*, ed. Thomas A. Hollweck and Paul Caringella (Baton Rouge, 1990), 1–51.]



## Appendix A

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### Voegelin's Introduction to the "History of Political Ideas"

[1] To set up a government is an essay in world creation.<sup>1</sup> Out of a shapeless vastness of conflicting human desires rises a little world of order, a cosmic analogy, a cosmion, leading a precarious life under the pressure of destructive forces from within and without, and maintaining its existence by the ultimate threat and application of violence against the internal breaker of its law as well as the external aggressor. The application of violence, though, is the ultimate means only of creating and preserving a political order, it is not its ultimate reason: the function proper of order is the creation of a shelter in which man may give to his life a semblance of meaning. It is for a genetic theory of political institutions, and for a philosophy of history, to trace the steps by which organized political society evolves from early ahistoric phases to the power units whose rise and decline constitute the drama of history. For the present purpose we may, without further questions, accept the fact that as far back as the history of our Western world is recorded more or less continuously, back to the Assyrian and Egyptian empires, we can trace also in continuity the attempts to rationalize the shelter function of the cosmion, the little world of order, by what are commonly called political ideas. The scope and the details of these ideas vary widely, but their general structure remains the same throughout history, just as the shelter function that they are

1. This document consists of a transcription of Eric Voegelin's earliest known introduction to the "History of Political Ideas," holograph prepared in spring 1940. Bracketed material indicates the editor's interpolations, indecipherable script, and original pagination. Transcribed and edited by Thomas A. Hollweck with the assistance of Jürgen Gebhardt and Paul Caringella. —E.S.

[destined] to rationalize remains the same. The permanent general structure comprises three sets of ideas: the ideas concerning the constitution of the cosmos as a whole; the ideas concerning the internal order; the ideas concerning the status of the cosmion in the simultaneous world and in history. The variation in details is determined by a greater number of factors of which some typical are: the conception of man; the religious, metaphysical, and ethical ideas of the meaning of human life; the economic structure of society; the ethnical composition of the groups; the genesis of the political organization; the elements of tradition preserved or excluded; the role of science and rational speculation; etc.

To write a history of political ideas would be a comparatively simple undertaking if the subject of these ideas were exhausted by the clear-cut nucleus that I have just outlined. The difficulties arise as soon as we start to unfold some of the implications of the initial statements. We can observe in frequent instances in history an inclination to interpret the shelter function of the political cosmion from a utilitarian point of view. But the utilitarian argument, while not being without sense in justifying a political order, does not reach the emotional center of the [cosmion], this center being the desire to create a world of meaning out of these human [emotions/aspirations/appetites] and desires, such as the desire for procreation and to outlive the [2] fragmentary personal life by a projection into the life of [emotion and character] or of a more comprehensive tribal or national group; the desire to give to the questionable achievements of an individual life an added meaning by weaving it into the texture of group achievement. Interpreted in these terms, the political cosmion provides a structure of meaning into which the single human being can fit the results of the biologically and spiritually [productive, procreative] energies of his personal life, thereby [relieving] his life from the [disordering aspects] of existence that always spring up when the possibility of the utter senselessness of a life ending in annihilation is envisaged. The peculiar problems involved in the enterprise to create a finite cosmos of meaning can be seen perhaps more clearly in comparison with other fundamental answers to the experience of the fragmentary and senseless character of human existence. There have always been men who have held the belief that out of the perishable qualities of human existence no earthly structure of intrinsic meaning can be built, that every attempt at creating a



cosmion is futile, and that man has to undergo the trial of life only as ■ preparation for a life of meaning beyond his earthly existence. In the organization of the personal life this belief may lead to the ideas of hard work, poverty, celibacy, silence, and prayer, in community or even in solitude. The monastic or anchoritic attitude considers fundamentally the attempt at political company to be ■ mistake, and wherever it has arrived at any influence in history its [reflex] has [tinged] importantly the aspect of the political creations: the Benedictine and Franciscan movements of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries have influenced decisively the whole pattern of Western political thought up to the present. The coexistence of, and comparison between, the political and the apolitical attitudes toward life reveals the creation of the political cosmion ■■ the experiment to overcome the essential incompleteness and relativity of human life by means of an image of divine completeness and absoluteness. The result, being not the cosmos but the cosmion, a cosmic analogy, is imaginary and is because of its imaginary character always exposed to the realization of that character by man. The important point in any system of political ideas is, therefore, the speculative [ . . . ] it devotes to the solution of the problem presented by the basic conflict between the finite character of the cosmion and the absoluteness at which it aims. In ■ polytheistic system the solution can be achieved comparatively easily by the belief in one God and his divine representative, the king, as the mediator of the divine for the finite, earthly achievement, and another God as governing the life of the soul after the entanglements of earthly existence have been dissolved, ■■ in the Egyptian system. In a monotheistic system the problem is more difficult, but it is capable of [ . . . . . ] solutions as shown by the incorporation of the political function into the charismatic order of the body of Christ in the period of the Carolingian empire. And our own time offers atheistic solutions, deifying the finite group, be it ■ nation, a race, or a clan; the totalitarian systems of ideas attempt to eliminate the apolitical realm of experience altogether and to substitute the cosmion for the cosmos; in this respect, as an attempt to create an absolute cosmos out of the finite forces of human desire and will, it may be called magic.

Once the whole import of the shelter function is realized, the dimensions of the problem of political ideas become visible. Above all: the political idea is only to a limited extent descriptive of any reality; its primary function is not ■ cognitive but a formative one.

The political idea is not an instrument of description of a political unit but an instrument of its creation. Or, as Schelling has put it in his *Philosophy of Mythology*, it is not the nation that produces a myth but the myth that produces a nation. The linguistic symbols [contained] in a system of political ideas, by calling ■ ruler and [3] a people by name, call it into existence. The evocative power of language, the primitive magic relation between ■ name and the object it denotes, makes it possible to transform an amorphous field of human forces into an ordered unit by an act of evocation of such units. The evocative act can be considerably [facilitated] when it is accompanied by the creation of a persuasive plastic symbol of the magic unit, so that the power of the name is corroborated by the [visible?] expression of a unit more tangible than the shapeless mass of human life and action into which the existence of a political unit dissolves itself empirically. The most convenient object to be transformed into a symbol of unit[y] is always man himself, and it has been throughout history the magic function of kingship to create political order by symbolizing it through the unity of human personality. One of the great psychologists of all times, Thomas Hobbes, [who has] had the deepest insight into this phenomenon, has interpreted the act by which ■ people transfer, in the legal language of his time, their power to the sovereign as the evocative act by which an amorphous group transforms itself into a person, and a distinctive political force in history. He has been guided in his analysis by such materials ■ the curious story in 1 Sam. 8 where Israel demands a king like all the other nations.

As the primary function of the language symbols involved in political ideas is to constitute reality, we are faced by a peculiar problem arising from the basic possibility to use the evocative terms in a quasi-descriptive function. In order to understand this problem it must be always kept in mind that language permits [one] to evolve elaborate systems of thought back of terms that empirically denote nothing. The magic power of language is so strong that the mention of a term is always accompanied by a presumption that in using the term we are referring to an objective reality. Such quasi-descriptive use of language gains in strength when it appears in intimate connection with the evocative functions proper, as is the case with political ideas. As a result we find in history ■ whole gamut of [ ? ] [ ? ] of political topics, ranging from purely evocative symbols through numerous intermediate shades to primarily descriptive

language and ending in purely empirical descriptions of political reality. There is, generally, no clear division between evocative and descriptive language in political thought, and the proper function and meaning of a political idea can, as a rule, be determined only by inquiring into its place in a complicated process involving the following phases: the primary purpose of the political idea is to evoke a political unit, the cosmion of order, into existence; once this purpose is achieved, the cosmion is a real social and political force in history; and then a series of descriptive processes sets in, trying to describe the magic unit as something not magically but empirically real. The attempt is inevitably bound to fail, but it is renewed nevertheless persistently and has produced an overwhelming wealth of political theories that all try to describe the magic unit in terms of something that may be considered objectively real. Every realm of being and every human activity have been drawn upon to formulate an empirical analogy for the imaginative reality of the cosmion. Its unit has been described on the model of mechanic forces and of a human plan; it has been supposed to be an essentially biological unit based on common ancestors or on common race, and it has been considered an organism in general, or more particularly a macroanthropos: in paternalistic ideas it is [produced on a family plan], and in [behavioristic ideas] on a factory plan; its unit is a spiritual one in theory of the *volonté générale*, the *Volksgeist*, the objective will, a collective soul, of [ . . . . . ]; important have been throughout history the theories of contract building the unit on a legal model. All of these theories, however descriptive their intention may be, and in spite of the factual elements to which they may refer, are still magic adventures themselves, as they try, in ages when the magic forces give out and men do not quite believe what they say, to rid the evoking ideas of their function by [pronouncing] that nothing has to be evoked and everything is already there. This type of political theory, if we wish to characterize it more precisely, may be said to have [4] ancillary functions on the enterprise of [re-creating], by continuous evocative practices, a cosmion in existence. While the theoretical occupation with the problem of political units generally preserves an element of magic, in some cases the descriptive attitude can break the spell and arrive, if not at a completely adequate, at least at a skeptical treatment of the problem. Max Weber, e.g., has been able by his sociological approach to dissolve the unit into types

of action of single human beings; the types become [entwined into the] problem of an active historico-political unit because the people involved orient their actions by convergent legitimating beliefs. This approach is realistic, in comparison with the others, insofar as it does not attempt to explain the magic unit of the cosmion analogically by reference to a [familiar] section of reality, but it threatens to [evaporate?] the peculiar quality of the cosmion altogether when it cuts short the type study with a [hint] at the belief as ■ unifying function, ■ that the belief does not differ very much from an [action]; and there is no reason why just this sort of belief should be held instead of another, or why any belief should be held at all. The drive toward and the power of magic evocation is blotted out by a more [immanent] psychological terminology. This kind of analysis is indicative of an attitude that, with regard to the cosmion, may be called [realistic]. It has produced one of the most interesting documents in the history of political thought, La Boétie's essay *Voluntary Servitude*.

La Boétie's attitude is one of bewildered revolt. When the magic has lost its spell and the facade of government becomes transparent, the disillusioned observer can discover nothing but acts determined by tradition and [heredity] or [ . . . ] and interest and lust of power. And disenchantment, having reached this stage, gives rise to ■ spirit of revolt against an unjust, crudely materialistic state of things. There is general agreement that the disenchanted interpretation of politics—which today is rather inadequately styled the materialistic interpretation—should be included in the [topics] of political ideas. It is not always realized, however, that such inclusion entails ■ change in the meaning of the term *political idea*. We have started the analysis in the working hypothesis that political ideas give ■ rational language order to the shelter function of the political cosmion; we, then, pointed out that the function of the language symbols was not descriptive primarily but evocative; and, finally, we noted the ancillary ideas that ■■■ [essentially] evocative but descriptive by intention. This stretch of argument does not go beyond the magic constitution of the political unit. But now we have to acknowledge that evocative and thereby constitutive ideas in the strict sense do form only one class of ideas, in ■ larger field of varieties all of which are destined to cope with the problem of the magic cosmion of order. Evoking ■ cosmion and thereby creating an order out of chaos means at the same time the wholesale suppression

and murder of incompatible possibilities in the character of man and of conflicting values. Every type of political order brings to the fore the men who fit its style and refers to second rank the nonconformist minds. A military society cannot be governed by a class of Confucian scholars; a society [basing its values] on income will not develop.

[5] When the evocative power of an idea has been seriously shattered under the pressure of disenchanting analysis it may shade off into the twilight of an ideology. A further class of ideas are the utopian dreams. They occur frequently in history since there are always men who wish to overcome the misery of the finite imperfection of the political cosmos by the invention of an order of intrinsic value that would settle definitely the struggle of the evocative forces. Dreams of this kind [assume always], openly or silently, that one or the other of the essentials of human nature [with need for] change can be eliminated from a social order. The elimination of an essential feature of human nature may be said to define technically a utopia. And, finally, men have cherished the idea of abolishing political order altogether and [living] in an anarchic community. Thus the ideas range from evocation to abolition of the cosmos, and all of them have a claim to be called political ideas. A thinker who interprets man may detest the phenomenon of political order and wish to eradicate it, but he cannot ignore it. He has to take into account the experience of life and death, of the anxiety of existence, and of the desire and force to create out of the perishable existence a cosmic analogy. The problem of politics has to be considered in the larger setting of an interpretation of human nature.

The preceding analysis makes it possible to determine the function of political theory in the development of political ideas. The term *theory* is used somewhat loosely, and frequently it is treated as a synonym to political idea. For the present purpose I intend to use the term as meaning contemplation, *theoria* in the Aristotelian sense. A political theory, then, would be the product of detached contemplation of political reality. Political theory in the strict sense obviously must be a very rare phenomenon in history. It is doubtful if an attitude of complete detachment has ever been obtained at all, and certainly there is no continuous process by which a theory of politics evolves and grows into a system, as theoretical physics does. A political theorist, being a human being, is brought up in a

political cosmion and participates naturally in the struggle of evocative forces of his environment; and he will turn toward theoretical [opinion] usually because he takes keener interest in politics than the average man, and he will take the interest because he is more sensitive with regard to the political evocation. The very qualities, therefore, that lead a man toward [ . . . ] of politics put the chief obstacles in his way when he tries to become an accomplished theorist. In most cases the theoretical attempt ends with a compromise, and this accounts for the vast body of political thought that has to be classified under the head of ancillary evocative ideas. The theorist reaches, in those cases, a certain degree of detachment and is able to take a larger view of the political process than his fellow citizens who are engrossed in the daily struggle, but the basic evocative ideas of his own cosmion prove to be the limit that he cannot transgress. The best theoretical minds of the Western European national states, e.g., have been incapable, and still are, to understand the empire structures of Central and Eastern Europe—which has led, at first, to the rather [comical] and disastrous idea of imposing Western democratic institutions on the succession states after the destruction of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and, then, to painful surprise when it did not work. There are only a very few [instances] in history that an intellectual temperament has been strong enough to [ . . . ] powers and to build the materials into a comprehensive system. [5a] Aristotle, Thomas, and Bodin may be reckoned among them, and it may prove difficult to find a fourth one. And even in these cases the [ . . . ] of evocative forces can be discerned clearly: Aristotle is limited by the existence of the polis; Thomas by the idea of the Christian empire; Bodin by the French national state.

The relation between political theory and political idea[s] is determined by the attitudes back of them, by contemplation and evocation. It seems to be inevitable that the two forces come into conflict. When contemplative analysis is carried to its limits it has to explain the cosmion as what it is, as a magical entity, existing through the evocative forces of man; it has to explain its relativity, and its essential inability to accomplish what it intends to do—that is, to render an absolute shelter of meaning. By analyzing the characteristic qualities of the cosmion, contemplation may have therefore the same effect as a cosmion disenchanting [ . . . ], even when the theorist has not the slightest intention to obtain this

result. Every serious attempt at contemplation will meet, therefore, with the resistance of the political forces in the cosmion as soon ■ it receives publicity and influence. It is too well known a fact to need specific illustration that, for instance, certain mythical elements in national history are taboo and that scholars tampering with them by detached investigation arouse public resentment. Political theory, therefore, has hardly a chance to be developed otherwise than by the efforts of outstanding individuals; it is almost impossible to advance it by a cooperative effort of scholars, by tradition in schools, or by gradual elaboration of problems through continuous generations of scholars, because this would require institutions of research and teaching that could not exist without social consent, and it is unimaginable that any political society would support, or even tolerate, an intellectual enterprise that questions the value of its cosmic analogy—at least no political society in history has ever done so. And the individual thinker who cannot resist the intellectual temptation to explore this delicate subject matter to the limit will probably be reluctant to hand over the results of his inquiry to a larger public, not because of any understandable apprehension of personal danger, but for reasons that it would be difficult to explain here and now. Anyway, we know of [ . . . ] historic instances, as in the case of Plato, that the theorist did not tell all he knew, and we may safely assume that the most important results of political theory never have, and never will, become known except to the more or less happy few.

## [6] History

The problems of a history of political ideas correspond to the complexities of the phenomena. The preceding analysis makes it plain that no single line of evolution can be drawn from ■ beginning point to the present. Since the primary function of the idea is to create a cosmion, the political ideas appearing in history are closely interwoven with the history of definite political units. They ■ so closely worked into the pattern of political history that a separation of ideas from the reality that they help to create may not be possible at all. And there are, indeed, philosophers who have considered the relation between political history proper and the ideas to be so inseparable, and the function of ideas to be so essential, that they have used the development of political ideas ■

■ guiding principle for creating ■ pattern of political history. The most important attempt in this direction is Hegel's philosophy of history; through the series of political organizations in time the objective idea unfolds itself ever more perfectly from the freedom of one to the freedom of all. There is no history of political ideas ■ separate from the history of the capitalized Idea; and the history of the Idea is identical with the history of its realization in political institutions. Marx has taken the same view when he considered the ideas to be superstructures over the basic dialectical evolution of economic institutions; his arrangement of forces [inverts] the Hegelian scheme, but the ideas are [involved impersonally] in the process of history just as in Hegel's system. The history systems of Hegel and Marx have become obsolete, but the problem that they pose remains. Through the curious ontological constructions we can still recognize the genuine insight that these thinkers have had into the close connection between idea and reality.

It is obvious that ■ history of political ideas when it follows closely the evocative function could dissolve itself into a catalog of ideas in the chronological order in which they have happened to constitute political reality. And when we come to the other end of the gamut and consider the possibility of a history of political theory as ■■ accumulative ever more systematized body of knowledge concerning political matters, we run equally into difficulties, as there is no doubt that it does not grow in a systematic fashion over any considerable stretch of time. But, while the question of continuity in the development of theory is at least not ■ simple one, we shall have to approach the problem of history from this angle. When evocative ideas enter into ■ compromise with theory and reach the stage of ancillary ideas, and when they further shade off into theory in the strict sense, they loosen their tie with the evocative reality and become ■ more or less separable body of thought. Scholars have always acknowledged tacitly or explicitly this fact when they built their histories around [such] great theoretical [human personalities] as Plato, Aristotle, Thomas, Spinoza, Hobbes, etc., and then tried to bridge the gulfs between them the best they could. There is also furthermore general agreement that the history of political ideas may readily be subdivided into certain well-marked periods, such ■■ the period of the Greek polis, of the Christian empire, and of the modern national state. Subdivisions of this kind are possible because the political units of these periods conform to certain general types



of cosmic analogy and the rationalizing and theoretical attempts of these periods show tendencies of convergence toward an ideal theoretical system representative of the period. A common stock of evocative ideas forming the basis, the theorists of each period are occupied with the task of contemplative analysis of the common stock.

[7] Starting from these generally unchallenged assumptions we arrive at the leading rules forming the organization of the material. A catalog of evocative ideas or [. . . .], and a continuity of theoretical contemplation, does not exist. But long periods of history are covered by the same basic types of evocation, and within such periods the contemplative process will culminate in one or more outstanding theoretical attempts at systematizing the materials of the period. A history will, then, have to show the gradual growth of theory out of an evocative situation; it will have to lead up to the limits reached within a situation of that kind and, then, show the dissolution and [abandonment] of theoretical thought under the pressure of new evocations. And every evocative process has to cope with the same basic problems, lines of tradition, and elaboration of theoretical problems [can be drawn] running from one evocative period to another. The internal process within an evocative period, and the process of tradition from one period to another, will furnish the rough general structure of the history.

The selection of materials, and their organization in the general structure, leaves ample room for discretion, but the process is not wholly arbitrary, and a history has at any rate to follow up to its beginnings the elements that play an important role in later phases. For this reason I cannot agree in all points with the arrangement of materials as it is rather generally to be found in histories of political ideas. The histories usually begin with the Greeks. Now, while the Greek systems are without doubt the first great eruptions of a systematic theory of politics, they do by far not embody all of the elements that become decisive afterward. The current of ideas that begins with Alexander the Great and develops into the idea of a universal empire does not continue the theory of the polis period, but has much closer relations with the earlier Asiatic development. The theory of the polis evocation has almost the character of an impasse, and the main current of ideas flows from the Assyrian, Egyptian, Persian, and Jewish evocations through the Hellenistic period into the empire evocations. Only at a much later period,

with the renaissance of Aristotle in the thirteenth century, does the full weight of Greek theory make itself felt again. The historic account has to begin, therefore, at least with the early empires of the Near East, and a good point could even be made for starting with an analysis of more primitive stages of human society, because their traces can be found in the later history. There are certainly the reflections of a *gynaiocratic* stage of development to be found in Plato's idea of a community of women, in the role of Diotima, in certain remarks of Saint Paul, in the [Carpocratian and similar Gnostic accounts] as reported by Clemens Alexandrinus, and still in certain formulas expressing the equality of women in the *Codex Iustinianus*. Primitive ideas of the totemistic period reach into the structure of the Greek polis, of the Christian communities and the Mithras communities ideas of Roman soldiers. But considering the space at my disposition I thought it better to confine myself to an occasional remark concerning those problems, and in general not to go further back than early Asiatic ideas.

This divergence from the conventional pattern is not conditioned by any internal problem of a period, be it the Greek or a later one, but by the necessity of drawing the lines that connect one evocative situation with another. To bring out carefully the connecting lines seems to be the most important task, because otherwise the history is in danger to degenerate into a collection of essays on important theoretical achievements that are not held together by anything but the covers of a book. I have tried, therefore, [8] to [pose] the mainstreams of tradition as the organizing principle throughout, always [marking] the point where a new evocative element enters the scene and either splits up or sums up the accumulated [mass]. The Oriental and the Greek developments, to a certain extent separate from one another, unite in the period of Alexander and the Diadochic empires. The organization of the Roman empire, uniting the Eastern and the Western [cultures], marks the next stage. With the appearance of the [ . . . ] tribes the East embarks, after centuries of [slow] separation, on a new independent development in the Byzantine and the Islamic empires, while the West crystallizes around the Carolingian empire. The crusades mark the beginning of a new period of contacts between East and West, leading to the renaissance of the Eastern intellectual heritage in the West. This period is a particularly complicated one because the intellectual absorption of the East coincides with the dissolution of the Western

empire and the growth of the national state. Though the process is complicated we are up to this point on comparatively safe ground. Scholars may differ consistently on questions of detail and the most suitable organization of the material, but there is general agreement that the national state is ■ distinct type of political organization with ■ characteristic set of ideas ranging from pure evocation to pure theory. Concerning the [number] and the recent development, however, no consensus of interpretation has yet been reached as the majority, it seems, hold the opinion that we are still in the period of radical nationalism; but the suspicion is growing that the idea of the national state may be decaying and that, for at least two centuries, new types of evocation are developing slowly but distinctly. The horrible noise with which the national states are filling the political stage may well be their agony. I rather incline toward this interpretation, and I have tried, therefore, to [unite] in the final chapter all the signs that I believe to be indicative of new evocative orders, although their final shape cannot be more than surmised.



## Appendix B

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### Outline of Cumulative Contents<sup>1</sup>

#### Synopsis of Cumulative Contents

##### Volume I. Hellenism, Rome, and Early Christianity

Edited by Athanasios Moulakis

###### *Part One. From Alexander to Actium*

Chaps. 1–7

###### *Part Two. Christianity and Rome*

Chaps. 1–5

##### Volume II. The Middle Ages to Aquinas

Edited by Peter von Sivers

###### *Part Three. Sacrum Imperium*

Chap. 1. Introduction

###### A. The Rise of Empire

Chaps. 2–4

###### B. The Structure of the *Saeculum*

Chaps. 5–11

###### C. The Climax

Chap. 12

##### Volume III. The Later Middle Ages

Edited by David Walsh

###### *Part Three. Sacrum Imperium Continued*

###### D. The Church and the Nations

Chaps. 13–22

1. The following document—apart from volume titles and other necessary changes editorially supplied—consists of the titles, headings, and subheadings given by Eric Voegelin in his 2,600 pages of typescript that form the remnant of the original "History." Written at various times over a fifteen-year period and partly mined for other published work, this material has a fragmentary and unfinished character that reflects the condition of the manuscript as the author left it, a condition that no editorial effort could fully rectify absent the author himself. —E.S.

APPENDIX B

Volume IV. Renaissance and Reformation

Edited by David L. Morse and William M. Thompson

*Part Four. The Modern World*

Chaps. 1-3

*Part Five. The Great Confusion*

Chap. 1

Volume V. Religion and the Rise of Modernity

Edited by James L. Wiser

*Part Four. The Great Confusion Continued*

Chaps. 2-6

Volume VI. Revolution and the New Science

Edited by Barry Cooper

*Part Six. Revolution*

Chaps. 1-4

Volume VII. The New Order and Last Orientation

Edited by Jürgen Gebhardt and Thomas A. Hollweck

*Part Seven. The New Order*

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*Part Eight. Last Orientation*

Introductory Remarks

Chaps. 1-4

Volume VIII. Crisis and the Apocalypse of Man

Edited by David Walsh

*Part Nine. The Crisis*

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and Early Christianity

Introduction. The Spiritual Disintegration

- a. The Problem of Apolitism
- b. Political and Apolitical Revolutions
- c. Formal Apolitism
- d. The Foreign Personnel of the Philosophers
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- h. Aristippus—The Political Function of Psychology
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*Part One. From Alexander to Actium*

1. Alexander

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